INSIDE

SPOBUS

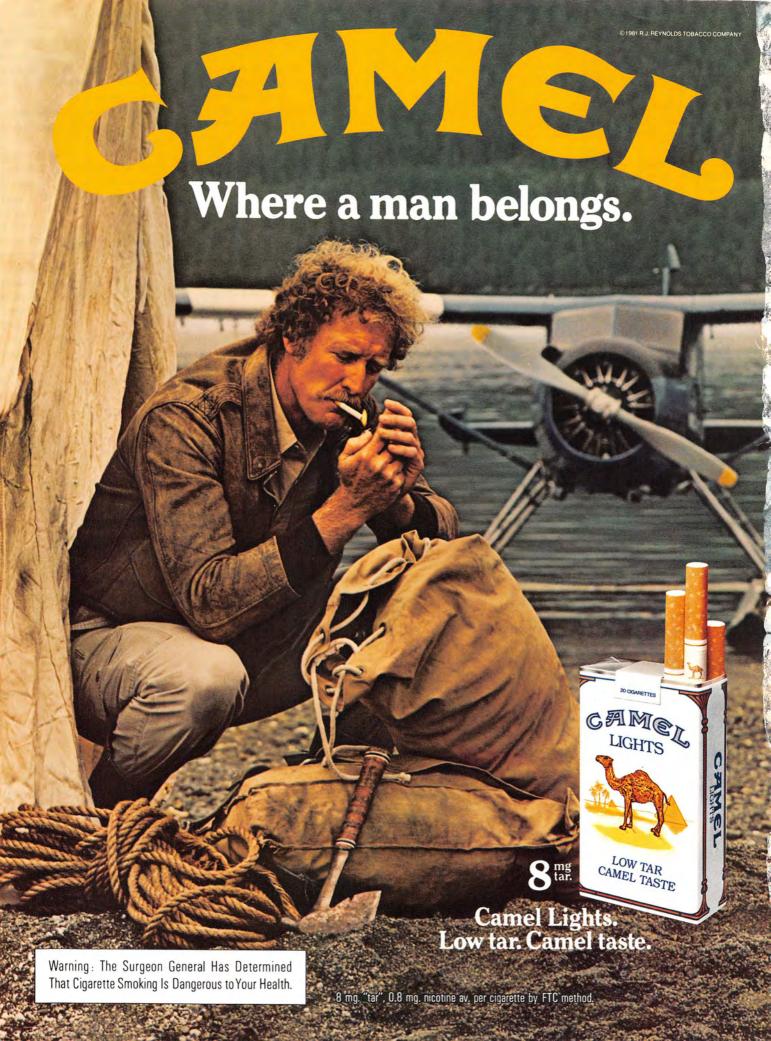
Super Bowl Preview

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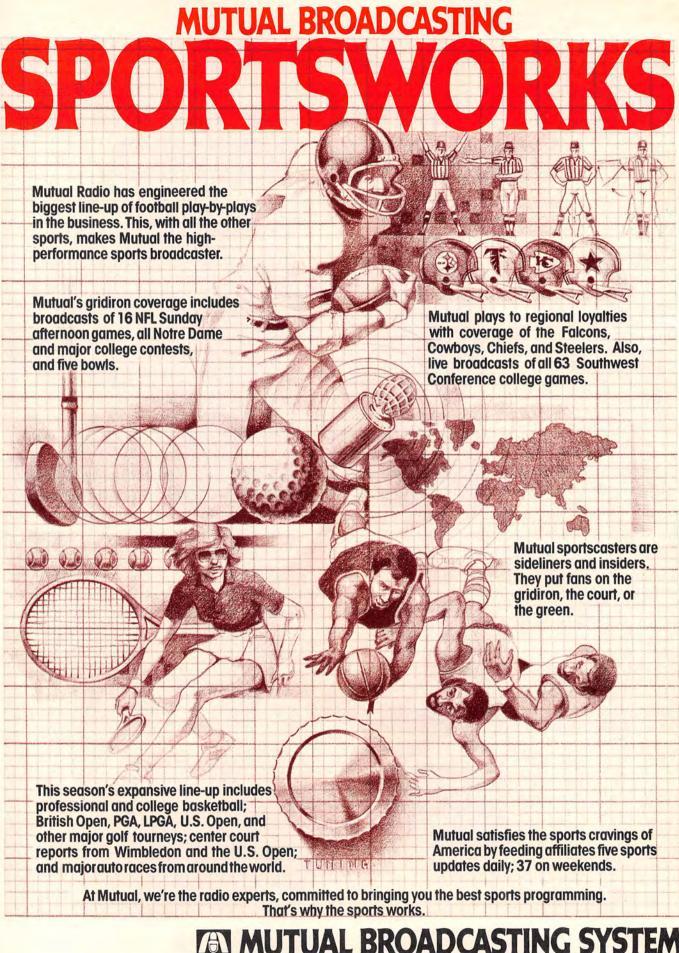
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1981

SUPER AVILYN



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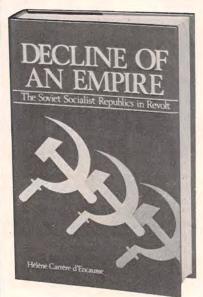
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SPORTS

VOLUME FOUR

JANUARY 1982

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COMEBACKS

hen I noticed Martina Navratilova's name on your November cover, I immediately picked it up to see what a woman was doing in your rather maleoriented publication. I later bought the issue, after seeing that the Navratilova story—by Robert Friedman—was indeed real, and also 10 pages long, not just lip-service to female athletes.

I liked the article. It was honest, open-minded, sensitive and, most important, a worthy tribute to an excellent athlete who has been unfairly treated by the majority of sports journalists. Positive signs such as Friedman's article and the fan support for Navratilova at this year's U.S. Open indicate that maybe people are finally catching up with those of us who have always appreciated the ability and integrity of women athletes over their appearance or perceived "femininity."

Martina Navratilova's admirable honesty about her bisexuality and other details of her personal life almost match her superior tennis talent. Even when she loses, Navratilova dominates the physical aspects of the game; it is her emotions, never her opponents, that defeat her.

> JUDY GOLDBERG Carrboro, North Carolina

on Powers' "Media" column, "Voices of America" [November], was a treat to the tastebuds of any true Atlanta Brave fan; aka a Skip Caray fan! Having played in the Braves' minor league system, I am endeared to my beloved "Launching Pad Lads." But my endearment is further enriched by the laughable, lovable quips by Skip. His treatment of the game is not so lovably audible as it is unique. He treats all events during the game as though he doesn't expect agreement, disagreement, laughter or dismay. He is casual, yet blunt. Best of all, he captures something that may yet to have been defined. Thanks, Skip.

PHIL GOODWIN
Baseball Coach
Kingsbury H.S.
Memphis, Tennessee

Congratulations on your November story on this year's Heisman Trophy

winner, Marcus Allen. There is no more demanding position in all of sport than tailback at USC. The player assuming this role has to live every game in the shadow of past legends. It becomes a test of courage, endurance and poise that few can live up to. As a player, and as a man, Marcus Allen more than meets the challenge.

DAN O'NEILL Los Angeles, California

am responding to your "Air To The Throne" article [December]. Although a great quarterback, Tommy Kramer, being a college graduate, should have heard of the state of Delaware. Also, Delaware is south of New Jersey, not Pennsylvania. We Delawareans take great pride in our state—especially Blue Hen football. By the way, we are the first state of the Union and the 1979 Division II football champions.

BILL GIVENS Newark, Delaware

It was with great relish that I read about Jack Tatum in "Update" [December]. I deem it of paramount importance that his name be included in some sports publication at least annually to assure his place in perpetual infamy.

I find it appalling that the American population has permitted this animal to roam free and escape prosecution, as well as castigation, from all of us who detest and condemn excessive violence in professional athletics.

Tatum claims that the Darryl Stingley "incident" was "never as big a thing in my life as the press made it out to be." Shame on the media for not making it big enough, since Tatum evidently requires the severity and enormity of his heinous act to be spelled out so that his limited capacities can grasp it.

While Tatum basks in the golden Hawaiian sun, Darryl Stingley sits motionless in a wheelchair, as he will for the rest of his life. In this country, since we do not advocate an "eye for an eye," we should see to it that Jack Tatum is constantly reminded of what he did and the enduring consequences

it has had and will continue to have on a gentle and gifted young man's life.

> MERRIE RICH New York, New York

homas Boswell says the 1981 base-ball season and World Series was bad ["Indecent Exposure," December]. Are you kidding? Steinbrenner was in a fight, Cerone told Steinbrenner off, Reggie was punched out by Nettles, and Winfield's \$23 million contract was worth about as much as George's pep talks. With all this Yankee misery, how can it be called a bad year? As a Red Sox fan, I have dreamed about this kind of year since the 1978 playoff game, but the guys in pinstripes definitely outdid themselves.

JOHN MOLORI Methuen, Massachusetts

thoroughly enjoyed Frederick Exley's article "Holding Penalties Build Men" [November]. Many of us probably have similar memories regarding the lifelong impact made by either a coach or some other authoritarian figure we have encountered in our youth.

CLARK RIEDEL Plattsburgh, New York

It's about time that someone did a story on LA's silent star, Jamaal Wilkes ["Inside Track," November]. In these times it seems that one is a star only if he is in the public spotlight. Wilkes might not receive the publicity of other stars, but his stats prove he is one.

WILLIAM BECK Lancaster, Pennsylvania

have only one comment: Please do not let INSIDE SPORTS go under. It is definitely one of the finest magazines in existence. The style of presentation and subject matter makes for enjoyable reading every month. I read in the paper that the circulation rate is 550,000. Surely with that kind of response, the magazine can continue. We sure hope so. I subscribe to other publications also, and INSIDE SPORTS is definitely my favorite.

KARL GRAHAM Kansas City, Missouri

INSIDE TRACK

hen the college T've had to become a much basketball class of '70 emptied its mother lode stronger person. At one point, I felt into the NBA and ABA, the first call in the NBA I would really crack.' draft went out from Detroit to Mt. Lanier, known to friends as Bob, and to opponents as Trouble. At 6-11 and be-



Bob Lanier

Malingerer and Loser. In February 1980 a trade to Milwaukee began the most tumultuous of Lanier's 33 years. The Bucks finished the season

tween 260 and 300

pounds-depending on

whose scales he last

tipped-the manchild

Lanier from St. Bonaven-

ture was supposed to be

the greatest thing for the

sluggish Pistons since

Bardahl. In many ways,

he was. He became a 22-

point and 11-rebound-

per-game performer, a

perennial All-Star, the

Detroit captain and presi-

dent of the players associ-

ation. However, as the

Pistons made an art form

of losing, they went

through eight coaches in

Lanier's 10 years. He

picked up tags: Intimida-

tor, yes, but also Loner,

20-6 with Lanier. But storm clouds replaced the sunshine in Lanier's life as the next season unfolded. In October, his father was killed in a hit-andrun accident. A couple of months later, Lanier's wife left him. "I felt like I was in quicksand," Lanier said.

The Bucks won 60 games, but suffered an agonizing seventh-game playoff loss to Philadelphia. In the offseason, Lanier had knee surgery for the third time. After almost quitting, he is piecing the fragments together again. INSIDE SPORTS sent Mike McKenzie, a sportswriter for The Kansas City Star, to visit with Lanier.

is: What was childhood like in Buffalo?

BOB LANIER: Daddy had some hauling trucks, and every summer from the time I was eight until I was 16, I rode on them with him. Nobody had a lot of anything. We played baseball a lot, but mostly all I remember is working on that truck. And watching my father gamble.

is: Was it rough for adolescents?

BL: In high school, we played basketball all summer. Summertime is fun time, shooting craps in the park, running from police when they tried to catch us. We shot craps on the bus to school, too. We did a lot of gambling. We'd gamble on shooting baskets.

IS: You said your father gambled a lot?

BL: Poker. Go out on the truck, come back on Friday nights, all they'd be doing is playing cards. My mother would call down there and say, "Bring Bobby home, bring him home." It was the intrigue, and all us kids used to gamble. Not big-15 cents or a quarter. It was the only way you survived the week to get extra lunch or something to drink. Luckily, that's how I got proficient at shooting baskets.... I was earning some money.

is: Were you and your father always a side-byside pair?

BL: He was always around my sporting events with encouragement: baseball and basketball, every game. Everything I did, he was there. Even on a pro level. He moved to Detroit because I went there to play, and he was at all our home games. That's probably why it was so difficult and drastic a blow when he died.

is: Did he coach you? BL: What helped most

was that he never pressured me or interfered. When I got cut from the team in high school, you might have expected him to jump on me. He just asked me why, and I told him the coach thought I just wasn't good enough and the year off would help me get maturity and strength.

is: Did your father support your activities to the exclusion of his own

lifestyle?

BL: He was wrapped up in me. He always did his own little thing, always trying to hustle different ways to make money. But he truly enjoyed the idea of having me for a son.

is: What about your mother?

BL: She probably had the strongest

influence on me as far as morals. She's an extremely religious, intelligent lady, always stayed in the background, did all the disciplinary work in our family. Just like any mother and son, we have our differences, and a strong loving bond. At this point, she's probably lonesome, after losing my father. I'll be glad when she knows what direction she's going in.

is: What about your marriage? One article said you and your wife divorced, then remarried one another.

True?

BL: No. That's what I read, too. I never was unmarried, on paper. She filed for separate maintenance and moved back to Detroit. Our marriage needed patchwork, so I got my hammer and some nails and some plywood and some of that master glue. . . .

is: After all the years of being torn apart publicly, you were torn privately by your father's death and your separation. What are the effects?

BL: I've had to become a much stronger person. At one point, I felt I would really, really crack. I was close. Coming out of it, I've talked to people I have confidence in, some in the clergy. I think I'll get it all together. But even now when I'm talking about it, I feel a lot of emotion inside me.

is: These things often are difficult to admit. It would seem doubly hard for you, because you're big enough to car-

ry the world on your back.

BL: I was in the depths of depression. I know a lot of people, but I've never been an extremely trusting person. It takes a long time to get to know me, and for me to gain that mutual understanding and confidence in another person, because of the life I live. In a glass bubble. People coming at you with all kinds of things, and you've been burned before. But I had no other choice except to get help. Either that, or do something crazy.

is: With the counseling, have you pieced your family life back together?

BL: It's on an up cycle, thank goodness. We've got that together again, hopefully. It's something that bothers you, and unless you go through it, you can't, well . . . I can understand going through it if there is some definite hatred between two people; but to go through it when there's still love there

is: Where are you headed?

BL: I find a lot of insecurities about the future. It's tough now because of a recent knee operation. Can I still be productive? You start questioning when you know the end is drawing near. People say you should make preparations four or five years ahead of time. I've thought about it that long. But to say I want to do this, that, or the other, how can I find a job with the same flexibility as in basketball, where I'm not tied down. And where am I going to earn this income (\$400,000 a year)? And be content with it, netting the same gratification I've gotten out of basketball. I've got to be selective. Get in something that's demanding, people-oriented, and where I can be a large part of the decision making. I don't have anything against car salesmen or PR people. But that's not what I want.

is: Is the passion still stirring for basketball?

BL: My passion for a championship, yes. If I can be productive doing it. I'd hate to be sitting on the bench, playing little and winning a championship. I don't want it so bad that I want someone to give it to me. I want to work for it myself. Otherwise, I wouldn't get the gratification. I don't want to be a tagalong.

IS: Your season did not begin smoothly. Was it the knee problem?

BL: Yes. I wasn't able to run at the end of summer, then I missed some training camp. I was caught in the middle of not being able to run because of pain in the knees, and not being able to get in shape because I couldn't run. I was playing like crap early, so I was going to quit.

is: Why didn't you?

BL: A lot had to do with regaining confidence in myself. Talking to Nellie (coach Don Nelson) and my attorney (Larry Fleisher), I decided to give it a chance. I have a habit of getting down on myself too quickly. I expect a lot. But I found out after I got a situation (medication) to deal with my knees and get in shape, I was contributing.

Is: Who was your favorite player in your graduating class of 1970?

BL: Pete Maravich. He truly amazed me, the things he could do with a basketball. He's the only guy I would have paid to see play.

is: You questioned Kansas City's trading of center Sam Lacey. Why?

BL: To break up a guy's home and family after 10, 12 years is too hard to handle. The league should have some kind of thing to prevent that. Especially if he's a contributor. I could see it if some guy's a dog. But you don't give all those years, then . . . it bothers me.

is: In the past few years, the NBA has taken a sharp rap for inferences of extensive drug abuse among players. Is the rap fair?

BL: It's a bad rap. Because the ath-

lete is in the limelight, people tend to overexpose or oversensitize an issue. That has a plus side to it, too, because it makes players more aware of the dangers involved in overindulgence in alcohol or drug use. But in some statements I read, players said 90 per cent of the players in the league use drugs. You wonder how ignorant a guy's got to be to make a statement like that. He's talking about him and maybe one other guy on his team not using drugs. That doesn't even make sense. But then a big headline comes up about some individual, and the public says, hey, maybe they're right.

Is: Are you saying drug abuse in the

NBA is not a problem?

BL: In our league there has been drug usage, not unlike any profession where people are making big money and being exposed to those things. However, I don't think it is a widespread problem.

is: You are president of the players association. Are any battle lines drawn between players and management?

BL: I doubt it, at this point. Disability, a severance plan and cable TV are major issues coming up. They're lukewarm issues. Our contract ends at about the same time as football's, next June, so we won't learn much from their situation. The thing I'd hate to get to is any kind of strike or lockout situation. Looking at baseball, it was detrimental to everybody involved. Fans have a hard time warming back up to an event, especially after the strike has been drawn out for a while.

is: How much does racism prevail in the handling of the NBA internally, in its effects externally?

BL: There's racism in the world. Whenever you have dark-skinned people against light-skinned people, there is going to be some kind of taboo. People tend to zero in on things like skin color. A couple of years ago in New York, when the Knicks didn't have a good team, people zeroed in on the fact 10 of the 11 were black and said that was why they were losing. Writers notice things like that. They rarely give black guys credit for thinking. Whether it's sports or business or whatever, they don't want to give them that credit. They only want to say the black guy is fast, or he has a great body. But if a white guy doesn't have a lot of skill, they'll write that he's real smart and that's why he's able to do something well. I'm conscious of how things are slanted that

is: Do players and fans think that way?

BL: I believe that for a sport with basically, what, 90 per cent white spectators, it's good to have white guys on the team. With talent. It helps attendance, without question. White people are just like black people; they want people they can identify with when they're watching a sport. Players in the league get along fine. The white guys I've played with—like Chris Ford, John Mengelt—we all got along pretty well. I'm going to take Mengelt back.

is: Mengelt? Please elaborate.

BL: No. It probably doesn't have much to do with black and white. John just seemed to isolate himself. There are no examples of white guys I played with that didn't get along (with black players). You don't have a lot of black-white friction, at least on the floor. Off the floor, guys tend to go their own way. You gravitate to people you feel comfortable with, whether they be black or white.

IS: When it is said basketball is the black man's game, is that a source of

pride, or a putdown?

BL: If black guys have used basketball as a vehicle to get an education and better economic opportunity, then it's a positive thing. If it's a thing where, because you're black all you can do is play ball, then it's negative.

IS: Is it reasonable to suppose the NBA, or any sport, could ever tran-

scend color lines?

BL: No. As long as there's black and white, there are going to be race issues. Is: How would you build the model

center, using parts from anyone?

BL: I'd take Kareem's height and grace, the strength of a Gilmore or Chamberlain, the aggressiveness of Malone and the head of a Russell.

is: They call you "Coach." You've played for several. Any good ones?

BL: I like VBK (Butch van Breda Kolff). All of them were pretty good, and I got different things from them—Ray Scott, Herb Brown, Dick Vitale. I loved VBK. He was sincere. And it wasn't just in basketball. He was very hyper, and very rabbit-eared. He'd hear people in the stands talking about him or the players. He bench-coached well, didn't mess with people. He'd holler and go off, but that was Butch.

IS: Does the coach win or lose games?

BL: If a coach is in a situation where he can pick the kind of people he wants to be an extension of his personality and thoughts, by and large they make and break themselves. Unfortunately in our league, few coaches get that kind of tenure. If they can't get everything together, it's an impossible situation. You've got a lot of high-priced thoroughbreds around about whom you have to make all the right decisions at the right times. When you've got a lot of people who are high strung all in a little room together, you've got problems.

is: Do they overcoach?

BL: Usually the coaches who come up through the college ranks have a tendency to try to make and break the game themselves, instead of letting the talent dictate what's going to happen.

is: Would you be a good coach?

BL: I don't think I have the temperament or patience. I'm fairly knowledgeable, but there's still a lot I've got to learn. Nellie (Nelson) and I talked about it one time, but I haven't thought about it seriously lately. I do that in the summer with my kids in camp. I get a lot of joy when my team wins. But when they lose, I get the same feelings I get when I'm playing and lose. So I don't know if it's a good situation. I don't like to lose, even when it's kidding around. So I don't think I could take that roller coaster. I'd have to make sure I pushed to have a great team.

IS: If you were commissioner of the NBA, what would you do to better the

game?

BL: Curtail the season and change the contracts and get people paid right. People get sick of the long season, and it should coincide at the end with the NCAA's. If we were having our finals around the time basketball pitch is at its peak, it would make for a much better situation. Also, I'd have three referees, all of whom would have the responsibility to make calls.

is: You've received a lot of national attention the past two years. Nelson said his team has no media stars, but

haven't you become one?

BL: No. People like to read about me because of all the stuff they hear. Most people don't take the time to get to know Bob Lanier. They know he's got big feet. They know he plays basketball. They know he looks like he's a mean guy. They never get inside.

IS: You mentioned looks. You often scowl. If looks could kill, sometimes you could be a lifer at San Quentin.

BL: When I was growing up, I had a tendency to stare at people. It's nothing to do with intent, just a characteristic. What makes it more imposing is I'm big, and with this beard and my eyes.... One of my kids has that same sort of stare, and it's kind of scary. People don't know what's on your mind. My mother smacked me one

time when I was younger, because of looking at her. I wasn't thinking a thing, but she thought I was.

is: Then you don't scowl at life off

the court, too?

BL: No, that's just the way people perceive me. I don't know if I'm happy . . . but I'm not unhappy.

IS: Let's get inside. I think I hear

some pussycat in there.

BL: Purring? I'm a people person. Unfortunately, because of my profession, my size, who I am, I have to change hats a lot so I don't get burned.

is: I was determined not to mention it. But, gee, Bob, you DO have big

feet.

BL: Guys come up all the time. They stop and stare at my feet, then take a second look, and I'll just be waiting for them. I would like my feet better if they were a little smaller (they are size 19). But I'm a big guy, so what am I going to do? At times, I don't think they look out of whack. But, sometimes if I just look at them alone ... whew, that's a big foot.

is: When you entered the NBA in '70, was it your expectation that young Bob Lanier would turn Detroit around

and set the league on its ear?

BL: My expectation was to get healthy and contribute. Emotionally, my first year—next to last year—was the most demoralizing year of my life. My knee was not right, I could not run. And when I'm emotionally depressed, I eat. It's like a vicious cycle,

going against myself.

It took a year and a half before my knee got to where I could do most of the things I did in college. And all the time after that, I was fighting the image thing from the initial impact. I was supposed to be the savior. But Detroit had bad foresight. If they would have worked for the long term instead of the short term, we all would have been better off.

IS: How much of a burden is it on your life and feelings that more is ex-

pected of you?

BL: You drag that around with you day in and day out. I always took it personally. I played with injuries and that compounded everything. That's why my body is such a wreck now: thinking everything was on me.

is: Has the viewpoint changed with

the change in uniforms?

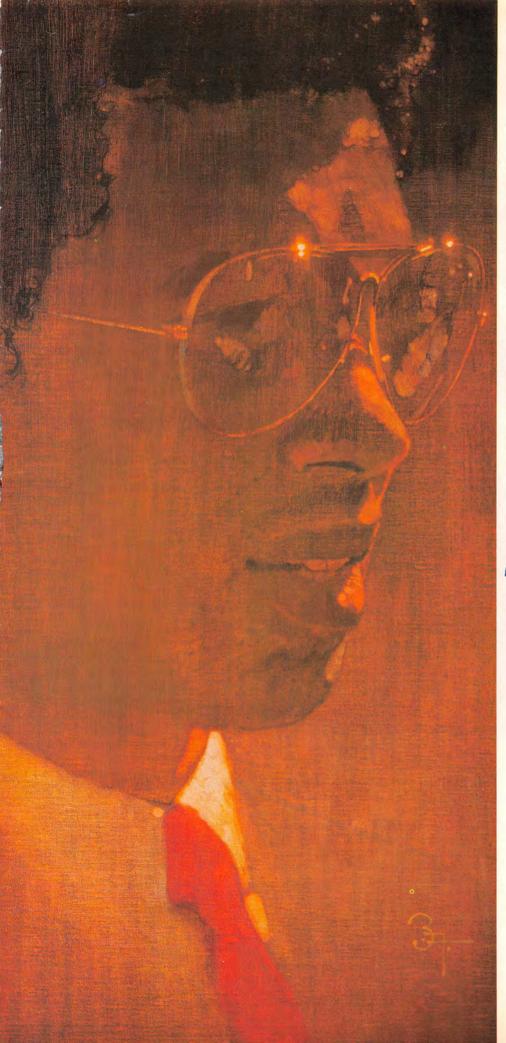
BL: It's difficult to lose the labels unless you go all the way. If I'm not able to win a championship, or at least have a real strong shot at it, then I'm going to feel kind of bad the rest of my life. I don't think I'll be able to deal with that.



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Blood on The Playground

BY STEPHEN SINGULAR

aymond, who was my best friend, and I played sandlot basketball in New York for six years before running into trouble. We never had any racial problems, although we were frequently the only white players in the game. A couple of times on the playground, Raymond had squared off against an opponent when he felt he was being unfairly pushed or handchecked. But neither of us had ever gotten into a fight on the court.

Raymond and I both grew up in the Midwest, and the thing that struck us about big-city basketball was the arguing. (In country basketball, you call the fouls on yourself; in city basketball, you call them on your opponent. The number of calls made is probably about

the same but this is still a remarkable difference.) City players would stop the game every five or 10 minutes and argue over a call, yell and lay down threats and curses until you were certain there would be bloodshed. There never was. The players were going through a kind of ritual, their violence coming out in words rather than blows.

"Those guys don't really want to fight," Raymond would say and chuckle proudly. "Back in Oklahoma, you didn't waste words that way. If you cussed somebody or they cussed you, there was going to be a fight."

Both of us eventually moved down-



town and lived fairly close to one another. There were no good gyms in our neighborhood, so we played only sporadically in the wintertime, waiting until the weather grew warmer and we could visit the large playground near Raymond's apartment. We had several good games there that first spring, when we both lived nearby. It was the best playground and best action we had found since leaving Riverside Park several years earlier. We began meeting there two evenings a week and often played until dark.

One Tuesday, about seven o'clock, I walked through the playground's south gate. The court was empty but eight or 10 young men-all of them white and all 18-20 years old-were sitting on the benches that lined one side of the court. Some of them were drinking beer, some were smoking marijuana. One of them walked over. "Give me the ball," he said.

I said nothing and took a step to my right, moving past him, and laid one in. A minute or two later Raymond arrived and the two of us moved around the basket, talking, shooting goals, loosening up. Four of the young men, dressed in blue jeans and shirtless, soon joined us, nodding hello.

"Want to play a game?" Raymond said to them.

No one answered. The tallest of them, a well-built black-haired young man, held the ball. He stood with his

> legs apart and his chest and arm muscles slightly flexed. It was as if he had just filled out and found his muscles, and he didn't want this to go unnoticed. He glanced around at his friends and the four of them changed position, until they formed a 15foot square with Raymond and me in the middle. They began passing the ball back and forth, beyond our reach.

> Raymond suddenly whirled around and jumped in the air, trying to intercept the ball, which sailed over his fingertips and bounced

"Too bad," one said. "Jump higher."

They made the square bigger and began to throw the ball higher, farther from our reach.

"Go after it," one called out, laughing.

"You're not trying." "I don't think they want it back."

"Don't look so sad, big boy. You might cry."

Raymond and I hadn't seen or been in a game of keep-away since high a school, 15 years earlier, and it was a little hard to believe that we were in the middle of one now. My stomach sank, then contracted, a mixture of anger and fear. "Let's get out of here," I said. "This is trouble."

"No," Raymond said. He pointed at 2 the black-haired young man. "We'll play you four-on-two, halfcourt and double your score. Then you give us the ball and leave us alone."

"Double the score?" the young man said. "Make me laugh. You lose and we keep the ball."

"Ray...."
"Shut up," he said to me. "We'll get the ball back. Are you ready?"

I nodded. The black-haired one tossed the ball to Raymond and said, "Take it out. Game's 15."

Over the next few minutes Raymond beat his black-haired opponent and another player by going to his left, then to his right; then he dribbled straight up to the young man and stopped and lofted one over his head. "In your face," Raymond said, as the ball fell cleanly through the netless goal. The first three times they had the ball he blocked a shot, made a steal and grabbed a rebound out of the hands of the dark-haired player. We were ahead 4-1. Raymond was playing unconsciously, better, harder than I had ever seen him play before. The other young men, still sitting on the benches, had been insulting us early in the game, but by now things had quieted down.

Raymond did something he'd never done before. "Feed me," he said. "I want the ball every time." I fed him with mixed feelings. I was enjoying his show and glad to be winning, but I could also see the frustration growing on the faces of our opponents.

Raymond and the dark-haired one began to bump under the boards and trade knees and elbows. They handchecked each other, even out beyond the free-throw line. The words between them grew louder, more direct. Raymond made another basket, a driving layup with his left hand, and the score was 7-2. As he started back toward the halfcourt line, the blackhaired player stuck out his foot and tripped him. Raymond fell headlong to the asphalt. He came up swinging.

Before Raymond's first punch could land, a member of the other team jumped up onto his back and locked his arms around Raymond's neck, starting to choke him. Another player grabbed his legs from behind and held him upright, unable to move. Someone grabbed me from the rear and crossed my arms behind me. I tried to squirm free but someone put his arms around my waist and began to squeeze. I felt helpless and enraged. We were surrounded by the young men.

"Let me have him!" Raymond was screaming. "One-on-one! Let's cut the chick...." The guy behind him tightened his hold on Raymond's throat and choked off his words.

I had stopped trying to move at all.

I had been in fights before-when I was a teenager and thought I was in shape-and I hadn't always been afraid. But this wasn't a fight. This was a gang jump.

Raymond's opponent reached into his back pocket and pulled out a knife. He flipped it open and waved it in front of Raymond's face.

"You're a pussy," Raymond said and spit on the court.

The young man leaned forward and. with a deft movement of the wrist, he opened a cut on Raymond's cheek. Not a deep cut, just a slice that drew blood. I yelled something and felt the grip on me tighten.

Raymond and I traded glances and for the first time I saw fear in his eyes. Fear or surprise. I don't think he had believed that someone would cut on him while he couldn't move.

The young man leaned in again and pointed the knife at Raymond's chest, six inches away, three inches away from his heart. "I'm going to deal with you now," he said. "I'm going to show you some tricks."

Raymond started to spit again, but he coughed once instead, as if holding back vomit, and then he swallowed hard. The young man brought the knife up to his shirt and cut off one button, and then another, with the same graceful movements of his wrist. He placed the point of the blade against Raymond's chest and must have pushed it lightly. Raymond blinked once and then closed his eyes.

I heard footsteps behind me, the sound of running feet. The others heard the sound too and several of them turned around to look, releasing me long enough to let me twist my head. Two middle-aged men, a black and a white, were running toward us, perhaps 100 feet away.

"Undercover!" someone yelled. "Run!" In a moment, Raymond and I were standing alone on the basketball court. The others had disappeared through a hole in the chain-link fence that surrounded the court.

The two men had reached us and stopped. "Police," one said. "What was the trouble? Your face is cut."

Raymond pointed at the building they had fled behind. "Get him," he said, his voice quavering. "The kid with the black hair. Bring him to me."

"What happened?" the black police-

man asked.

Raymond reached into his pocket, took out a red handkerchief and wiped the side of his face. The blood had almost stopped running. "I was beating that black-haired kid," he said, "and he pulled a knife on me. It was 10 against two. We have a name for that in Oklahoma...." He looked at the policemen and his voice trailed off.

"Do you want to come to the station and file charges?" the black officer asked.

"They weren't criminals," I said. "They were kids, punks. They were high. They need the hell beat out of them."

"They weren't very good," Raymond said. He looked at me. "They couldn't play and they couldn't fight. You and I could have whipped any four of them in a clean fight."

would call Raymond at least once a week, but we didn't play any more basketball that spring or summer. He always had an excuse and never wanted to discuss his decisions. One evening in September we were walking down the street when I saw the darkhaired young man approaching us on the sidewalk, alone.

"Ray," I said. "Look. Our friend."

Raymond said nothing but walked faster, moving out a step or two ahead of me. The young man had a long, confident stride and didn't recognize us until it was too late. Raymond grabbed him by the shirt collar, holding their faces close together.

"You pulled a knife on me in a basketball game," Raymond said.

"Hey!" His eyebrows were arched and his arms were strangely limp, hanging at his sides. He still didn't recognize us.

"You cut my face," Raymond said. "Oh." The young man glanced up. "Oh, I never...."

Raymond shook him hard. "If I ever see you on a playground again, I'll put you on the asphalt and break your bones. You understand?"

He nodded. Raymond shoved him to one side. "Get out of here."

As we walked away, I looked over my shoulder and saw him talking at our backs, then swearing, his voice growing louder as we moved away.

"I was always afraid I'd see him again," Raymond said. "Afraid I'd kill him. That's why I couldn't play ball.

"I'm not angry anymore," he said, walking faster, "He just broke the rules and ruined the game for me. When people don't play fair, there's only one thing left to do. Lean on them. Otherwise, there's no basketball."

STEPHEN SINGULAR is a writer, now living in Denver.

The Selling Of One-Shot Wonders

BY H. L. KLEIN

his isn't going to be pleasant. As Tim Raines is finding out, a great season doesn't open the doors to the Emerald City. Unless you become a household name in the integrated upscale consumer market, as they say in the ad biz. To do that, you'd only have to toss eight shutouts, help your team win a World Series and captivate all the folks at home with your beaming rotundity, like Fernando Valenzuela. Madison Avenue just ain't the quick fix Yellow Brick Road.

"I only wish it was that way," says Marty Blackman, a New York City talent coordinator who packages the Miller Lite TV commercials. "I'd like to say it takes only one great accomplishment, but in advertising,

once is not enough. I wish I had a nickel for every time I tried to peddle someone after he threw a no-hitter or won a rushing title. On Madison Ave-

nue, once means bupkus."

And so dies a myth as cherished as The Gipper's Last Request and Babe's Called Shot. The Gold Medal, the Hickok Belt, the MVP or a perfect game are not worth a million.

Occasionally a few hundred thousand. More probably, a few thousand. And that's where the gravy train usually stops. Mark Fidrych picked up \$30,000 for an Aqua Velva commercial before arm trouble clipped his wings. Don Larsen made about

\$15,000 after he pitched his perfect game in the 1956 World Series. But both were offbeat crowd pleasers. Fidrych liked to cultivate his garden on the mound and Larsen was known to tipple a bit. After the novelty wore off, both were forgotten. For most athletes, that single shot at glory is like foreplay that never comes to fruition.

Jim Bunning took in \$1,000 a few hours after he pitched a perfect game against the Mets in 1964 by saying hello to Ed Sullivan from the studio audience. But Len Barker hasn't made a cent outside baseball from the perfect game he threw early last season.

Which leads to the \$640,000 ques-

tion (adjusted for inflation and free agency): If I do something great, can I make money from it outside the sport? A Talmudist answer: It depends on who's doing the doing.

"The most important thing is for the ad agencies to see that a guy's got warmth," says George Lois, an advertising legend for his feats of pairing Sonny Liston and Andy Warhol in a Braniff ad, and getting a host of sports

stars to cry for Maypo.

Mark Spitz wasn't even lukewarm. He nearly drowned in endorsement and personal-appearance requests after he won seven gold medals in the 1972 Olympics. But Spitz, dashing and handsome, wasn't bubbly or cuddly. He's now selling real estate in Southern California.

> Our winner of the One-Shot Wonder Award is Orville Moody, the 1969 U.S. Open champion. Old Sarge, an affable sort who likes to present himself as a hangdog figure, was a superb shotmaker but a wretched putter. However, that year, the putter behaved well enough for him to win the Open, the World Series of Golf and be named PGA Player of the Year. Since then, Moody's earned about \$500,000, including a network TV commercial for Metropolitan Life, clothing endorsements and an instructional book. Until a few years ago, he played three or four times a year at the Concord Hotel in upstate New York. For this, and having the hotel's name on his golf bag, he received \$10,000 annually.

"I never won much of anything, so it had to be the Open," says Moody, now a pro at a country

club in Sulphur Springs, Texas. While the money was good, Moody no longer is in the chips after some bad business

investments.

Mike Eruzione is still searching for E his role. The captain of the 1980 gold 2 medal winning hockey team has 3 earned about \$70,000 since the team's 2 Olympic victory. He's a commentator on a cable network (\$27,000 a year), \(\geq\) has appeared in a Volkswagen com- 2 mercial with his teammates (\$1,000), and has given scores of talks to corporate sales and civic groups for from \$500 to \$2,000 an appearance.

"This is my NHL," says the 27-year-old Eruzione. "I felt I didn't want to play any more because my moment had already passed. Life moves on and I have to move with it. I always thought my destiny would be to teach phys ed somewhere, so I feel lucky about what's happened. My father always told me to be honest and work hard, and that's what I'm doing.

"It's funny how people still react to me. I went to an ABC affiliate meeting and a friend talked me into watching The Hollywood Squares. I walked in and the producer says, 'You're going on as a guest of Peter Marshall.' Marshall asked me four or five questions, but he obviously didn't know who I was. One of the Lennon Sisters had to tell him. After the show, the producer wanted me to go on again as a contestant, so I told him to call me. But no one has ever called."

Sometimes, circumstances can ruin a budding advertising career. By the standard of accomplishment, Bob Beamon should be cashing the paychecks Bruce Jenner's now endorsing. After 131/2 years, his 29-21/2 long jump at the Summer Olympics remains unsurpassed. "Bob's shot at big advertising money was ruined by the display of Black Power politics at Mexico City, not his skin color," says Michael Halstead, a vice-president of International Management Group and Beamon's manager. "The upraised clenched fist made black Olympians about as marketable as Edsels.'

Since then, Beamon has earned about \$300,000 globe-trotting for footwear and apparel manufacturers. He hopes to be a commentator for the 1984 Games. "I came along when America was trying to put it all back together," says Beamon, now a track coach at York College in New York. "Nobody was ready for the trouble those Games were associated with."

Gordon Johncock also is still waiting. Like Beamon's feat, the 1973 Indy winner's victory was tarnished—two accidents and two deaths that day. In addition, Johncock isn't a mixer. "I don't pursue too much attention and I don't travel much," he says. Johncock's work has been limited to ads for Valvoline, STP and Goodyear.

Rick Mears, the 1979 Indy winner, is articulate and handsome in a Midwest, Jimmy Stewart way. He says he took in about \$60,000—including \$25,000 for a Ford TV commercial and two regional fast-food ads—besides the \$270,000 winner's purse. One Indy win didn't carry him far. "Rick Mears is not a household name," he

says. "I need another Indy win."

In the past year, George Brett pulled in about \$500,000 outside baseball for his unsuccessful assault on .400 in 1980. That includes \$35,000 for a Lifebuoy commercial, \$90,000 for a 7UP spot and \$7,500 for each personal appearance.

"George did eight appearances a month during the offseason and maybe four during the season," says David Burns, owner of a Chicago sports celebrity service. "He's not real grabby."

Rod Carew doesn't get the chance to be grabby. His reward for flirting with .400 in 1977 was a \$100,000 bonus from Calvin Griffith (on top of his \$150,000 salary), royalties from a biography and a few personal appearances at \$1,000 each. His income today—close to \$1 million a year—is mainly from baseball.

"Rod has made it clear that he's not interested in outside stuff," says Jerome Simon, Carew's attorney. "I think it's his way of rationalizing. I think he's articulate and personable, but the ad industry doesn't. It's a touchy thing with him."

Simon is right about the industry, although he may be wrong about his client. "Rod is not a personable guy," says a New York promoter who asked to go unsung. "He's cold and aloof, and advertisers think that'll rub off on their product. George is a happy, giggly kid."

Hank Aaron has a different theory. "A lot of people believe that Brett made a lot of money and Carew didn't because George is a good-looking white boy. Well, all I can say is, I don't know about the good-looking part."

Like Brett, Roger Maris also did exceptionally well after his season in the spotlight. After breaking Babe Ruth's home-run record in 1961, Maris earned about \$300,000 from ads, endorsements and appearances. That's more in today's economy than the \$750,000 Reggie Jackson reportedly takes in outside baseball. Maris' agent, Frank Scott, negotiated a \$75,000 deal for Maris and Mickey Mantle to appear in a highly forgettable movie, Safe at Home. They split a \$50,000 guarantee for endorsing shoes and men's apparel. And Maris picked up \$35,000 for a series of home-run contests against Harmon Killebrew, Jim Gentile and Rocky Colavito. A lot of mileage from one asterisk.

There's no formula for putting a price tag on one-shot wonders. Nor

can you measure up the chosen few with one great shot and a career to match.

Joe DiMaggio is comfortable today not because he hit in 56 straight games, or even because he was the preeminent ballplayer of his era. After setting *the* record in 1941, DiMaggio's popularity with the ad industry consisted of posing for cigarette ads for \$500.

It took his marriage to Marilyn Monroe, his graceful aging into a silver-haired eminence and a folk-rock song making him the symbol of an age when heroes roamed the earth to convince advertisers to use Joe DiMaggio. Aside from an unsuccessful campaign for Brylcreem in the late 1960s, the Yankee Clipper was in tow until 10 years ago when he began sailing for the Bowery Savings Bank in New York and Mr. Coffee. DiMaggio's contracts call for an estimated \$250,000 annually from each ad campaign.

For 40 years, the story has been passed along that as DiMaggio neared 57 games in 1941, his camp followers included sales reps from Heinz. According to legend and more than a few published accounts, he was badly jolted when the streak was stopped, leaving him with only 56 varieties and short \$10,000 the Heinz people supposedly had for him. But DiMaggio chalks the tale up to sweet invention. "Nobody ever told me about it. I remember reading that story, too, but it never happened."

Ted Williams also had a pretty fair season in 1941, hitting .406. And for his trouble, Williams also pulled in \$500 for doing cigarette ads. Williams didn't capitalize much on his name until 1960—after he retired—when his agent, the late Fred Corcoran, negotiated a \$50,000 deal with Sears.

Well, time heals most wounds, even image problems—like those of Williams and Wilt Chamberlain. Nobody knocked down Chamberlain's door when he scored 100 points against the Knicks in 1962. Chamberlain became wealthy from prudent investments, not from Volkswagen, which used him for a short time in 1966 and brought him back for a distant encore in 1979. "Chamberlain was a surly guy, but he's popular today because that image has faded and what remains is the image of the great power center," says George Lois.

For a college coach, a national title carries enormous prestige in the commercial marketplace. It means he's usually been trying for many years to



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get there, winning a lot of games along the way. Corporations treat the NCAA championship coach like Knute Rockne resurrected. Al McGuire, for example, has been giving about 30 pep talks to corporate sales staffs each year at from \$2,500 to \$5,000 a shot since his Marquette team took the NCAA title in 1977. But McGuire also has a four-year, \$200,000-a-year deal to do color commentary on NBC. That sets him apart from your run-of-the-mill NCAA championship coach.

"It couldn't have been done without the championship," says McGuire. "But it was more than that. That 12-second shot showing me crying on the bench after the buzzer was the turning point for my image. Before that, Al McGuire was known as an obnoxious and arrogant guy. But there he was, crying, showing some compassion and humanness. No, if it wasn't for the championship and that shot of me crying, I'd still be playing cards in smokefilled rooms and chasing hookers."

O. J. Simpson is another one who doesn't have to do any chasing. He doesn't have to run through airports anymore. Even before he rushed for 2,003 yards in 1973, he had already made commercials for Chevrolet and RC Cola, as well as working as a commentator for ABC Sports in the offseason. After the 1973 season, four more offers came along: Schick, Foster Grant, Wilson and Hyde Spot-Bilt shoes. But the Schick and Foster Grant deals ended after a year, and

Simpson began shopping around for a lucrative long-term arrangement. That didn't materialize until executives from the Ted Bates & Co. agency sat down with marketing men from Hertz in May 1975.

"They had a storyboard picturing a harried traveler jumping over a pile of suitcases to get to a Hertz counter, and they brought it to Jerry Burgdoerfer, vice-president of marketing for Hertz," says Marilyn O'Brien, Simpson's manager at the time. "Burgdoerfer said, 'That reminds me of the obstacle course in the Superstars competition. Who won it this year?' The answer was O. J. Simpson."

What followed was a three-year deal worth more than \$300,000. It was renegotiated in 1977 when Simpson won Advertising Age's Star Presenter of the Year award-the industry's Oscarand renewed again in 1980 for about \$200,000 a year. He also began a profitable relationship with Dingo boots, nailed down a novel contract with TreeSweet orange juice-paying him a fee plus a percentage of annual profits-and an even more imaginative arrangement with NBC. The network pays Simpson to be a sports commentator, plus it supplies the five-year, \$10 million production budget for his company, Orenthal Productions, which does movies and variety shows for

The Juice is very sweet.

H. L. KLEIN is a freelance writer and attorney based in New York.

The Wages of Perfection

What pitchers earned the year they pitched perfect games (since 1900)

		Team	Opponent	Score	Salary
CY YOUNG	5/5/04	Red Sox	A's	3-0	\$3,190
ADDIE JOSS	10/2/08	Indians	White Sox	1-0	\$3,000
ERNIE SHORE	6/23/17	Red Sox	Senators	4-0*	\$4,500
CHARLIE ROBERTSON	4/30/22	White Sox	Tigers	2-0	\$3,000
DON LARSEN	10/8/56	Yankees	Dodgers	2-0	\$15,000
HARVEY HADDIX	5/26/59	Pirates	Braves	0-1**	\$22,000
JIM BUNNING	6/21/64	Phillies	Mets	6-0	\$48,000
SANDY KOUFAX	9/9/65	Dodgers	Cubs	1-0	\$89,000
CATFISH HUNTER	5/8/68	A's	Twins	4-0	\$18,000
LEN BARKER	5/15/81	Indians	Blue Jays	3-0	\$225,000

*Relieved in first. Retired 26 batters after runner at first caught stealing on first pitch.

** Retired 36 consecutive batters. Lost game on error, walk and double in 13th.

City

What Sports Needs Is More Jewish Athletes

BY R. D. ROSEN

n section 25 of Fenway Park last season, two gentlemen in their 70s talked.

"I've had it with baseball," said the one wearing a nylon athletic jacket with "Beth-El Catering" across the back.

"I miss Burleson, Lynn, Fisk and Hobson, too," sighed his friend, who was wearing a soiled Red Sox cap.

"That's not why I'm sore," the one in the nylon jacket said. "It's not free agency. Let the little pishers have their deferred annuities. That's not what's ruined the game."

"Of course. It's expansion," the soiled cap said.

"No, the problem is Jews. There aren't enough of them in the game anymore. Do you remember the Polo

Grounds, 1941? Bill Terry had four Jews-Harry Feldman pitching, Harry Danning catching, and Sid Gordon and Morrie Arnovich in the outfield."

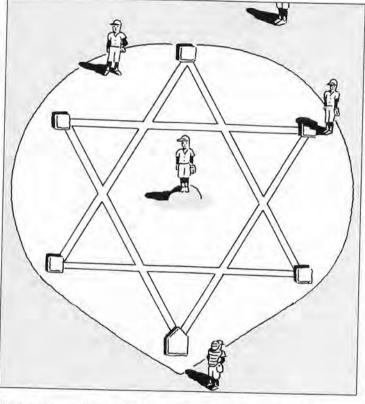
"They finished fifth," the soiled cap reminded his friend. "Twenty-five-

and-a-half games out."

"No matter. You could identify with the game. Today, what do you have? Twenty-six teams and two Jews! Ross Baumgarten and Steve Stone. These are ballplayers?"

"Why not Steve Stone?" the soiled said. "He won the Cy Young,

Cy young he won, but a Sandy Koufax he isn't. When Koufax refused



to pitch the first game of the '65 Series because it was Yom Kippur, I was proud to be a Jew-even if I did have my money on the Twins. Besides, Koufax had a better curve. It's a shame. Jewish owners we've got, and Jewish sportswriters like a plague, but do any of them play the game?"

Let's face it: The nylon jacket is right. When it comes to baseball, Jews are hardly the chosen people. In fact, there is a scarcity of Jews in all four major professional team sports; the NFL and NBA have three, baseball has two and the NHL can't even claim one. Not that Jews ever dominated these sports. In the pros, other major ethnic groups come and go in waves, while for Jews, the wave is a periodic sprinkle at best.

Baseball rosters used to be routinely punctuated with Jewish names. As recently as 1972, the Oakland A's had a trio (Ken Holtzman, Mike Epstein and Art Shamsky). A few years later, so did the Chicago White Sox, but by then their three Jews (Stone, Baumgarten and Ron Blomberg) constituted a near-monopoly in the majors. The NHL has never come close to a minyan (despite Larry Zeidel, Bernie Wolfe and Mike Veisor), but over the years the NFL (Sid Luckman, Marshall Goldberg and Ron Mix) and the NBA (Max Zaslofsky, Red Holzman and Dolph Schayes) have had their Jewish stars. Now it's easier to find a

Jew at the Vatican than in the pros.

Since Koufax departed, Jewish fans have been poised for a Great Jewish Hope. That issue was laid bare by rookie center Hank Finkel's first appearance in Boston Garden in 1969; when he stepped to the foul line and . . . and crossed himself, the Jewish season ticket holders groaned with disappointment.

The mystique of being a Jewish professional athlete (JPA) is not lost on the players. A few years ago, then-Cleveland Indian outfielder John Lowenstein failed to disabuse a sportswriter of the belief that Lowenstein was Jewish-"Actually, I allowed him to persuade me I was Jewish"-and the organist at Municipal Stadium began hammering out "Hava Nagila"

whenever he batted. Although perversity might explain this bizarre conduct, it's more likely that Lowenstein wished to confer on his career a distinction that had otherwise been lacking. Perhaps Lowenstein was thinking of Moses Solomon, who played for the New York Giants in 1923 and found being Jewish a remarkable asset. Solomon came to be known as the "Rabbi of Swat' despite career stats of eight at-bats, three hits and no homers.

JPAs are often regarded with the same tenderness that Samuel Johnson felt for female preachers. ("Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well;

but you are surprised to find it done at all.") Goaltender Ross Brooks, who played for the Boston Bruins in the early 1970s and holds the NHL's unofficial record for most consecutive wins (14) by a goalie, discovered the benefits available to JPAs. When Brooks played the Rangers and Islanders in New York, Jewish fans constantly asked if they could do anything for him. He received streams of Rosh Hashanah and Hanukah cards from well-wishers. The B'nai Brith called.

There was just one hitch: Ross Brooks isn't Jewish. Growing up in a Jewish neighborhood of Toronto and later working in a Jewish swim-and-tennis club in Providence, Brooks developed a religious reputation that he found too troublesome to disavow. "But I was happy to be called that," Brooks says from the bar and lounge he owns in Lincoln, Rhode Island. "Some of my best friends are Jewish."

If you're surprised that there aren't more of them, given the advantages of being a JPA, then obviously none of your best friends is Jewish. Otherwise, you'd be aware of the obstacles to being a JPA, presented by the Jewish family. In most Jewish families, being a pro athlete ranks low on the scale of Significant Things, somewhere between the priesthood and polo. When they communicate their career preferences to their children, Jewish mothers and fathers are seldom heard to say, "Sonny, your mother and I feel you should spend a little less time with the science club and a little more working on your reverse dribble." An essential fact of Jewish family life is that one's despised older cousin Myron, who is pledged to a career in law or medicine—and is unable to throw a ball 10 feet without dislocating his shouldercarries far more inspirational weight than Koufax, Neal Walk and Al Rosen combined.

A Jewish professor and baseball buff I know says, "Jews look at athletes as pieces of meat, and in Jewish culture you're not brought up to be a piece of meat, but to run the meat market."

This perspective was first subtly conveyed when my father's father found me watching a White Sox game on television in the late 1950s. He stood for a moment, squinting, as Nellie Fox fouled off a Cal McLish fastball. "Feh! Grown men playing a child's game!" and left the room. I hesitate to lay at Grandpa Hymie's feet my inability to hit the curve consistently in subsequent years, but my childhood was colored by a deep historical prejudice against wearing

spikes to work. (In some cases, that prejudice extends to merely associating with people who wear spikes. "My father," Howard Cosell wrote in his autobiography, "never recovered from his disappointment at my decision to abandon the law"—a sentiment widely shared by Howard's viewers.)

The assumption that Jewish family life is frequently a repressive force as far as athletic ambitions are concerned is not made only by Jews themselves. When Steve Stone was with the White Sox, he says, pitching coach Johnny Sain told him that any player as close to his parents as Stone would never come to any good. ("John's no Rhodes scholar," Stone says in his defense. "He's from the old school of chewing tobacco and having it dribble all over your uniform, and knocking down your mother if she's got a toehold on home plate.")

What is not explained by the tenor of Jewish home life is explained by this: Pro baseball, football, basketball and hockey draw their talent from either inner cities or rural America and Canada. When Jews occupied the urban ghettos, sports offered the physically gifted a level of income and access to the American dream unavailable elsewhere, just as they have for blacks for the last 25 years (to blacks' detriment, as some have persuasively argued). But as Jews migrated in large numbers to the suburbs after World War II, indicating rising economic status and expanding career opportunities, an athletic career lost its shine.

The Jewish stereotype plagued Koufax throughout his career. "The way the fantasy goes," he wrote in his 1965 autobiography, "I am really a sort of dreamy intellectual who was lured out of college by a bonus in the flush of my youth and have forever after regretted-and even resented-the life of fame and fortune that has been forced upon me." If Koufax fit the stereotype poorly, Stone fits hardly at all. His father was his Little League coach in Cleveland and his mother was an avid Indian fan. Moreover, his academic talents were no more of an obstacle than his parents: "They saw my grades in school. They knew their son wasn't going to be a dentist or doctor or lawyer."

Pittsburgh Steeler tight end Randy Grossman, the NFL's only Jew outside of Miami (where Ed Newman and Steve Shull play), may have benefited because his background is neither very comfortable nor very Jewish. After the age of 10, he grew up in a non-Jewish suburb of Philadelphia, "where I never

separated myself. I was just another one of the kids." Also, Grossman was not in a financial position to attend college easily without a scholarship.

Among active JPAs, the most curious case is that of White Sox southpaw Ross Baumgarten, who grew up in Glencoe, Illinois, an upper-middle-class suburb on Chicago's North Shore. I grew up and played ball in the next town; my high school coach used to mock the area's affluence by shouting when someone made a bad throw in practice, "That's what you get from closing so many Cadillac doors." Yet Baumgarten rose above his advantages, with help from his parents, who could afford to send him to baseball camp as a teenager.

Baumgarten may be that needed example for a future wave of JPAs. But let's be honest—professional team sports are going to have to be made more attractive to Jews, and not by serving lox and bagels at postgame meals. There is a more fundamental deficiency that would have to be corrected: the absence of guilt as a motivating factor.

If the conventional competitive winning spirit could be diluted by a sense of guilt, and if public displays of player guilt were encouraged, the number of JPAs would increase dramatically. For instance, take a foolish backcourt foul at a crucial juncture in an NBA playoff game: Suppose that the offending player, instead of protesting his innocence to the referee, began running around the court in a frenzy of self-deprecation, "It's all my fault!" he weeps, grabbing a teammate by the jersey. "I'm hopeless! I've ruined the season. How will you forgive me?"

And since Jewish guilt attaches itself just as easily—if not more so—to good deeds as to bad, consider a baseball player who hits a game-winning homer in the bottom of the ninth. No sooner has the ball disappeared into the seats than the batter goes over to the pitcher. "Believe me, I wasn't trying to hit one out. Really. This must be very upsetting to you."

Now a pitcher of the old school would reply swiftly: "Bug off, creep. The next pitch you see from me will be coming right for your frontal lobes."

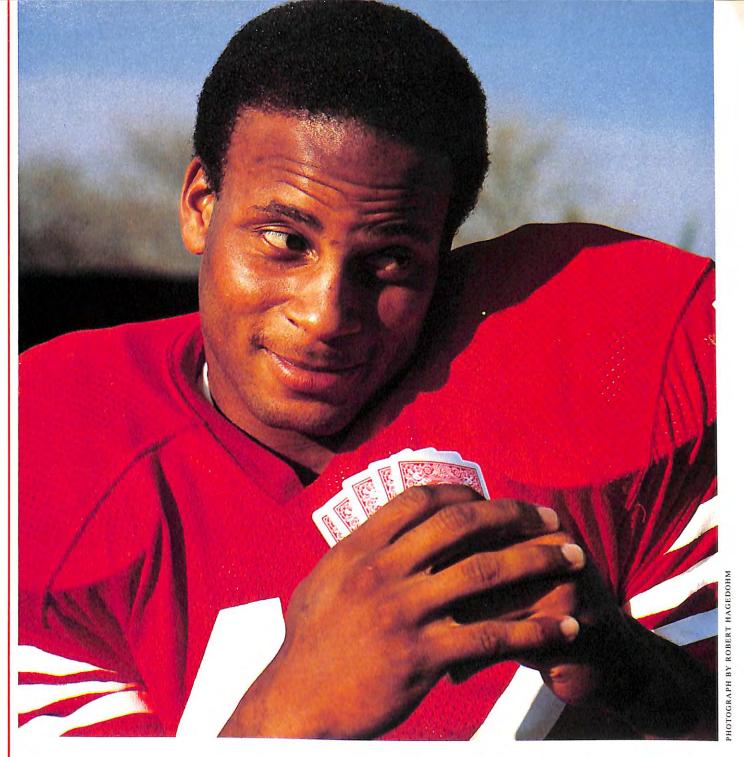
But, on the other hand, if the pitcher is a mensh, he says, "Don't be silly. I'm to blame. My arm is a curse. Now go—my suffering is too great to be shared."

R. D. Rosen, author of Psychobabble, is TV critic for the Boston Phoenix and the Washington Journalism Review

SPORTS

SWEET SWEET

weet little 16. My, my. Seems like only vesterday. . . . Couldn't the NFL have picked a slightly more romantic spot than Detroit for the coming-out party? The umpteen-million media representatives that will show up are griping already, but the locals can hardly wait. Anything's better than sitting around on the front porch and watching the cars grow, right, maw? On the following 32 pages, we'll tell you a few things about the show to come—and we'll evoke the golden memories of Super Sundays past. The 49ers' gambling cornerback Ronnie Lott—this year's Lester Hayes—is profiled (along with cornerback Louis Breeden of the Bengals) by Gary Smith. Speaking of gambling, Pete Axthelm looks at the wonders and vagaries of Betting Year 1981 for a few clues as to who will cover in Supe 16. Media columnist Ron Powers previews CBS's own titanic battle—with the ghost of last year's Super Bowl coverage by NBC. The CBS theme: More is better—more cameras, more technicians, more angles. Then Pete Dexter takes a look at the Cowboys' Randy White, one-time bad boy, now some kind of bad football player. Topping it all off, we'll visit with 11 former Super Bowl performers. Winning was super, but better to have lost than never to have played at all.



Either pulling to the inside straight, like Ronnie Lott, or calling someone's bluff, like Louis Breeden, the new odds on cornerbacks favor...

THE GAMBLIN' MAN By Gary Smith

T WAS A SUBTLETY DURING the scene change that no one noticed. The 49ers and Giants were abandoning the turf at Candlestick Park; the fans and shadows were coming out to replace them. With the division-clinching celebration just two seconds away, New York quarterback Scott Brunner's 40-yard pass was parachuting down the sideline, and safety Carlton Williamson was leaping to intercept. Nothing unusual there, except the 49ers winning a division.

The next day, the San Francisco defensive backs gathered to watch the game film and Williamson leaned forward when it was time for his last-second steal. Hey, wait a minute, somebody punch that button and freeze the film.

That dude crawling up his back fighting him for the interception, the dude raking at the ball even as Williamson tried to run with it, chrissakes, the dude that actually helped tackle Williamson . . . that was teammate Ronnie Lott.

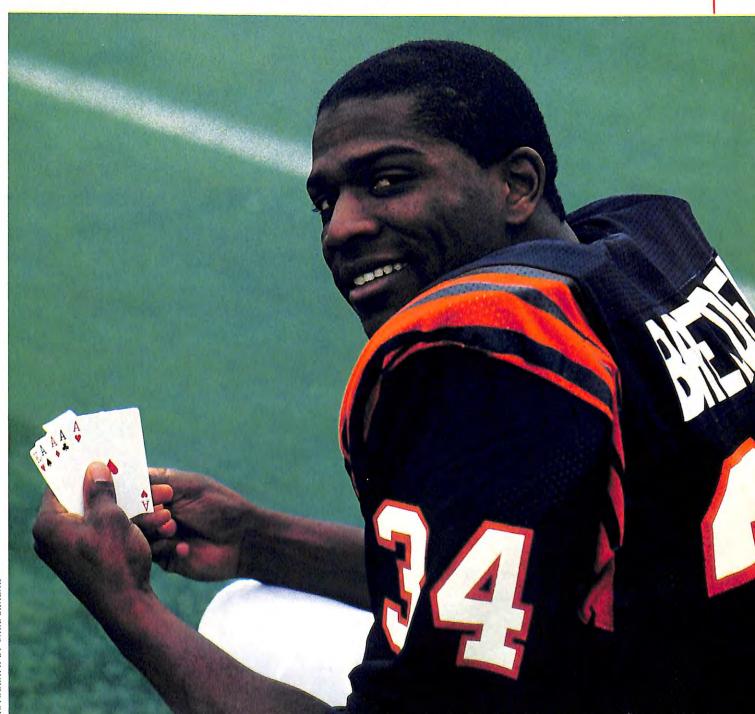
The defensive backs pointed at the

screen and laughed, then pointed at Ronnie Lott. "Hey, man, look at you. You're just going for the stats. You greedy...."

"Yeah, just what kind of friend are you anyway?" kidded Carlton Williamson. "And here all along I'd thought that was a Giant on my back."

It wasn't a Giant, and it was more than greed.

It was part of pro football's latest response to the onslaught of the forward pass. It was one of the new breed of cornerbacks that is changing the NFL.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL SKALAK

HE OLD CORNERBACK stocked the basement with canned goods and waited for the bomb to fall. The new cornerback shakes his fist at the heavens and defies it to.

The old cornerback grumbled at the rules changes and called the new game a track meet. The new cornerback gets down in the starting blocks and says, "Whenever you're ready. . . . '

The old cornerback prevented. The

new one instigates.

"The way the game is changing," said 49er linebacker Jack Reynolds, who has played with the old and the new, "the guys who once would have been linebackers are the new defensive linemen. The guys who once would have been defensive backs are the new linebackers. The new defensive backs? We haven't really seen them vetthey're the ones just starting to come into the league."

In 1978, the NFL stole the cornerback's bump and run. It limited him to one chuck, within the first five yards of the line of scrimmage, and then it played on his neuroses by giving quarterbacks more time to throw with liberalized holding rules on the offensive line. The cornerbacks caught in the transition were in shock.

But the NFL is a league of stimulus and response. It has responded with the new breed, to whom every forward pass is an invitation to an interception. Retaliation has replaced humiliation. The embarrassment of getting burned has cooled. Okay, so you've completed 25 of 37 today. Try it again, hotshotnext one's mine.

The new cornerback doesn't measure his value by the number of passes completed against him. If he did, there would be cleat marks up Cowboy Everson Walls' walls. He accepts the restrictions the league has placed on him and finds another way to get even. He makes the terrifying hit that causes the key fumble or takes the acrobatic risk and steals the ball. He gambles.

"We preach to our kids, 'Don't worry about getting beat on the bomb," said Jet defensive coordinator Joe Gardi. "Offenses can put so many points on the board, that 14 points aren't usually going to beat you. Twothree turnovers will make up for it. Ten years ago, giving up a bomb was disastrous. Not now.'

There are other reasons the new cornerback can gamble more. The zone and combination man-zone defenses that are becoming so prevalent allow more short-yardage passes but give him a freedom of reading and reacting that doesn't exist in a man-toman struggle with a wide receiver. He often has deep help from a safety that allows him to take a chance and bite on the first move, and the luxury of five and six defensive back alignments. "And you see more TDs on interception returns because zone defenses are in better position to block," pointed out ex-DB Irv Cross.

The safeties playing next to the old cornerback were too preoccupied stuffing the run to provide him deep help. He, too, was built to bring down the Jimmy Browns and Jimmy Taylors. "We played more like outside linebackers do in the 3-4 today," said CBS commentator Tom Brookshier, a cornerback with the Eagles in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "We'd come up on the run a lot faster than they do now. We didn't gamble too much. If you got beat long back then, the crowd would come out of the stands after

you. Now they expect it.

"We'd just hit the guy all the way up the field. I had such a reputation for that, guys would stop coming my way. Guys had families. But these cornerbacks today can't do that. I don't know how they cover guys that run 4.3, 4.4 in the 40 and don't even leave any footprints. They're getting the prime runners and hitters to play cornerback, guys who won't run when the media comes blitzing them after the game. Hell, Ronnie Lott doesn't even have a conscience. He'll gamble on everything. If I ever gambled on a sideline pass, I'd make sure I had one hand around the receiver's throat and the other hand to go for the ball. If I missed it, I'd strangle him. I had just one interception our championship year." With the athletic ability the new cornerback has, he is not content to just sit back 12 yards and prevent the bomb. He wants the ball, and he wants to park it in the end zone. "That's money in the air," is the war cry of a 49er defensive backfield that features three rookies and third-year player Dwight Hicks.

Three rookies? Five years ago that would have been sadistic. The old DB saw so few passes in college that he needed two pro seasons just to get used to looking up. But the colleges are winging it now, too, and the DBs are coming out battle-ready. In addition to first-place San Francisco, firstplace Cincinnati started a first-year safety (Bobby Kemp) and a secondyear safety (Bryan Hicks) and augmented them with a first-year nickel back (John Simmons). First-place Dallas started a rookie cornerback and a

free safety. After 14 games, Everson Walls' 10 interceptions led the NFL and Mike Downs had six.

"Walls says, 'You got one, now I'm going to get one," said Cowboy personnel chief Gil Brandt. "He's got so much confidence, it's incredible. Everybody picks on him but it doesn't bother him. He doesn't get beat-the other guy gets a lucky play. You have to think that way now. If you don't gamble they'll eat you alive.'

Very few defenses consistently stop very few offenses on four downs in the NFL of the '80s. If they are not going to punt you the damn thing peacefully, the only choice left is to snatch it. It's risky business, of course. Guess right enough times and you can be like Lester Hayes in 1980, with 13 interceptions and a Pro Bowl trip and a Super Bowl ring. Guess wrong enough times and you can be like Lester Hayes in 1981, with three interceptions after 14 games and staring at a fourth-place finish.

Either way, the defensive focus changes. The Nobises and Butkuses disappear and defensive back replaces middle linebacker as the glamour position. High school and college wide receivers don't sulk when coaches ask them to switch sides and start backpedaling. DBs are getting drafted higher (29 in the first three rounds of the last two drafts) and paid better to roll dice across the green felt in stadiums every Sunday afternoon. They're getting reverse-angle replay every Monday night. They're helping to instigate bold, even drastic franchise leaps to the top of their sport.

The way Roynell Young of Philadelphia and Lester Hayes did last season, when they helped their teams find the Super Bowl. The way second-year cornerbacks Mark Lee of the Packers (six interceptions) and Eric Harris (five interceptions) of the Chiefs did it this season, when they led their teams into contention.

And most of all, the way Louis Breeden of Cincinnati and Ronnie Lott of San Francisco helped turn two of football's worst teams into two of football's best.

HE THING ABOUT A Mercedes, it's an investment," Ronnie Lott was saying. "It's a class car. It reflects on you. When you resell it, you should get your money out of it. I'm looking at a two-seater 380SL."

Ronnie Lott has GQ in his magazine rack, Oriental furniture in his living room and his initials-RML-on his own corporation. He is the new-breed cornerback from his hair to his heels. He still drives a five-year-old Datsun 280Z, with maroon-and-gold USC colors and a stick of something that smells like strawberry hanging from the rearview mirror. "I didn't want to come into camp driving something flashy," he confided. "I didn't want any ego clashes. I wanted to fit in and be part of the fellows."

He fit in. Then he stood out. Through 14 games he had clamped seven interceptions and tied a league record for rookies by ramming three of them into the end zone. He had devastated the Cowboys with two intercep-

tions, a TD and a fumble recovery. He had recovered two fumbles and caused four others overall —including the one that popped into Dwight Hicks' hands for an 80-yard touchdown—with a style of tackling close to terrorism. When Falcon receiver Alfred Jackson split his lip, Lott responded later with a series of jackhammer forearms that cost him an ejection, a \$500 league fine and an undisclosed team fine.

"Must have hit Jackson four times with his forearm," winced a teammate, "but the ref only saw the last one."

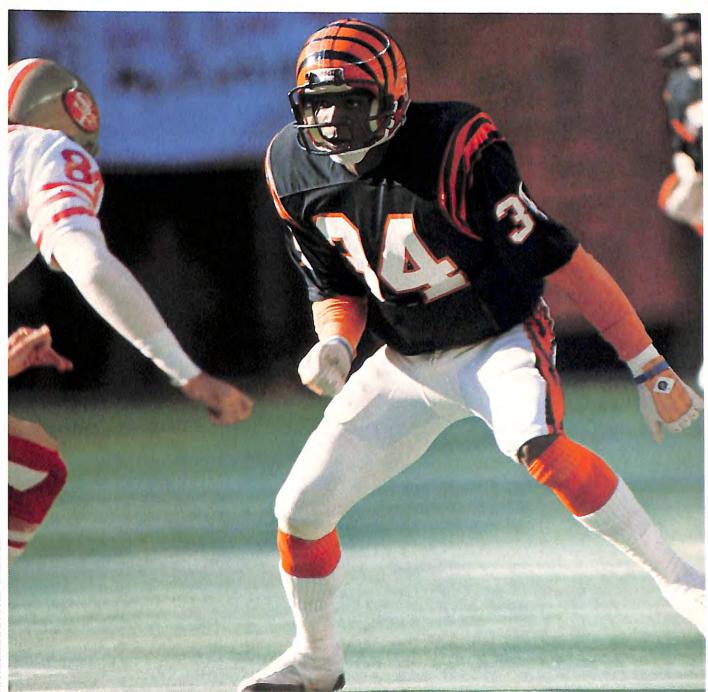
"He's a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," said Hicks. "We all change when we go on a football field, but Ronnie

changes so much that it really stands out."

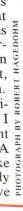
Most of the new breed are like this, quiet, well-adjusted men with a sense of self-assurance strong as a rod of steel, an appetite for violence that flares on Sundays and then returns to its proper gland. Lott is 6-0, 200 pounds and runs a 4.57 in the 40. The combination does not feel healthy when applied to the small of a receiver's back.

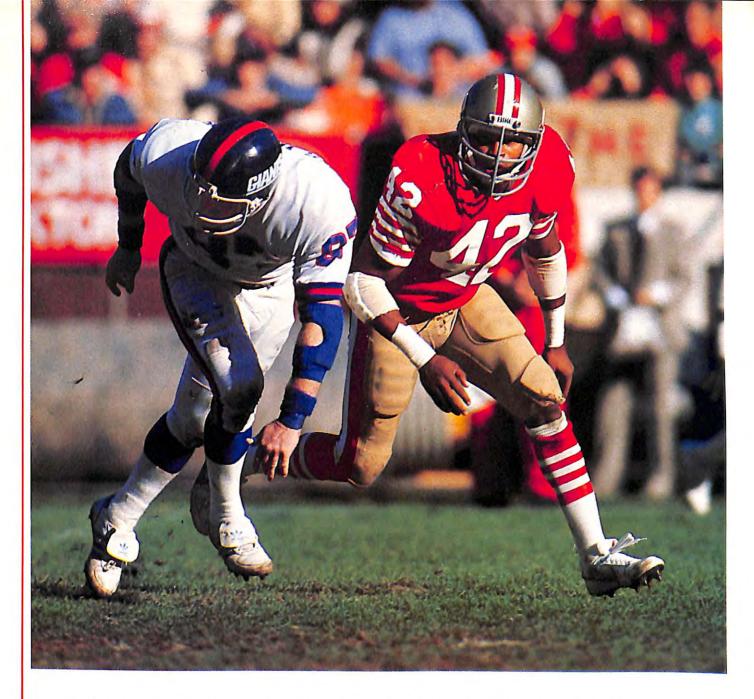
But even more than rolling the receiver, Ronnie Lott loves to roll the

Breeden: I'm the receiver



APH BY JOHN D. HANLON





dice. He feels empty inside after a game unless he has created a turnover. "That's my challenge," he said. "It's easy to make the safe play. Why should I? The great receivers are going to put your nose in the ground, so why lay back? I don't just want to play a position. I want to make plays, big plays. Then, when you get the ball, don't be satisfied with that. You try to score. When you make an interception and don't do anything with it—that's nothing."

The gamble is not a blind guess. It's a firecracker flash of insight and adrenaline that erupts at the end of a string of clues. Deductive ambush, if you will. Ronnie Lott: "All sports have a gambling side to them. I've watched them as I was growing up. You get to the point where you can

sense when it's time to go for it, when you know they're going to attack you. First you've got to watch film and study tendencies all week. Then, in the game, you've got to see everything in an instant: The score, the time, the down, the distance, what hash marks. I try to pick up everything that happens on a football field. The body movements of other players, the way that they carry themselves. I watch the sidelines, look at the coaches' expressions. Football is a game of emotions-everybody shows them. You can pick up what's going through people's minds. Certain parts of the field at Candlestick, I know receivers can't accelerate on. All these things come into play. I just understand football. I have this knack of always being around the football.

Lott: deductive ambush

"An example? Sure. When we played the Rams, Billy Waddy ran a semicurl on me and was wide open, but they didn't throw the ball to him. I kept watching him as the play was ending, and the way he was looking at Dan Pastorini, you could see he was saying, 'Look, I'm open,' and Pastorini was looking back. So then they ran the same play and I was waiting for it, and I cut in front for the interception.

"But then when we played the Giants, I guessed against Earnest Gray. I cut in front of him and the ball went right past me for a 29-yard play. A rookie mistake," grumbled Lott, like to he was a 10-year vet. "But I can only think of one other time all season I've

been wrong and paid for it.

"When you know you're going to go for it, the feeling is like being at Vegas, when the dealer is showing a queen and you've got 14 and you ask for another card and he throws you a seven. And you're saying to yourself, 'I'm right! I'm right!"

onnie Lott Pulled into the garage of his Santa Clara home and looked straight through the window of his 280Z. He was showing off the vision he has out of the side of his head. "Right now, I can see this wall on my left," he said, "and I can also see you writing on your notepad. I've always had good peripheral vision."

Ronnie Lott was bred to be an NFL gambler. Growing up in Rialto, California, he read an Oscar Robertson biography that emphasized the importance of seeing the entire floor. Lott immediately started practicing. He'd sit in classrooms, staring straight ahead, seeing how much detail he could pick up about his classmates on either side.

He played shortstop in baseball and point guard in basketball, perfect offseason preparation for what the new breed of cornerbacks must do. Lott even made the USC varsity basketball team as a junior, the only year he tried out.

In high school football, he developed his hands as a sophomore and a junior playing wide receiver, then developed his analytical ability as a senior playing quarterback. He also played defensively, but he never thought defensively. His heroes were Charley Taylor and Paul Warfield; they are why he wears No. 42 today. Even now, when he sees a receiver miss a pass on the Monday night games, his first thought is, "I could've caught that."

All the skills and mental voracity were there when Lott walked onto the USC campus in 1977. All he needed was a tutor. Roaming the USC secondary at the time was Dennis Thurman, a horseplayer of a DB who spent all week handicapping the opposition and then played his hunches on Saturday afternoons. Lott got hooked. "He was like a father to me," Lott said of Thurman, now a Dallas cornerback. "I always thought that if I could know the game like he does, with my size and ability, I could be a good defensive back. He taught me that I shouldn't approach it like I've got to stop all these great receivers-they've got to beat me."

His senior year at USC, a professional secondary playing 400 miles up the California coast allowed 29 touchdown passes, and 66 completions out of every 100 thrown against it. Often they were so far out of position there was no one even close enough to blame. "You felt like a deep-sea diver who gets radioed a message to come up to the surface, because the ship is sinking," said secondary coach George Seifert.

The 49ers made Lott the eighth pick in the first round, took cornerback Eric Wright from Missouri in the second, safety Carlton Williamson from Pitt in the third and immediately appointed them starters. "I questioned the organization's judgment," admitted free safety Hicks, the lone holdover starter. "Among the coaches, it wasn't 'Oh my God, what's going to happen with three rookies?" said Seifert. "We had no choice. Each exhibition game had to equal a year of experience."

They signed ex-Ram linebacker Jack Reynolds, who gave the young secondary stability, and they acquired defensive lineman Fred Dean, who gave it a pass rush. A pass rush is like a pair of lopsided dice for a gambling secondary—the percentage of jackpots jumps dramatically. Hicks, freed from plugging leaks in 1981, had picked off nine passes through 14 games. The 49er takeaway-giveaway ratio had jumped from 34-40 in 1980 to 45-22. The secondary had become known as Dwight Hicks and the Hot Licks.

And at midseason, starting 49er running back Earl Cooper walked up to Ronnie Lott and shook his head. "Man," he said, "you got more TDs than I do."

Lott refused to bask. RML Enterprises still needed more—more interceptions, more TDs. "We play Cincinnati this weekend," he was saying on a Wednesday night in early December. "Ken Anderson, Isaac Curtis, Cris Collinsworth. They can pick you apart. I'm very interested to see how I do against them. Against the talent in this league, you can fall off the bridge on any Sunday."

He sounded like he couldn't wait to climb the girders.

HAT SAME WEEK, IN A WIND-whipped city in mid-America, another of the new breed was enjoying the view from the bridge and wondering what Joe Montana, Dwight Clark and the 49ers had in mind for him. Unlike Ronnie Lott, however, Cincinnati cor-

nerback Louis Breeden had already fallen off and knew the chill of the waters

The previous two seasons, Breeden had been singled out as one of the claws in the Bengals' grip on last place. He had tried to play with a shoulder injury, to macho everyone's mouth shut, and it had only made it worse. "People kept asking me, 'What's wrong with Louis Breeden?' "said Ken Riley, the other Bengal cornerback. One fan, unaware he was sitting next to Breeden's father at Riverfront Stadium, pronounced that Louis should be dead.

"I'd come home from games like I was hypnotized," said Breeden, a low-key, mature man. "I was paranoid, afraid to go out in public."

Then came 1981. Breeden was flying all over the turf, had made four interceptions in two critical back-to-back games, tied a league record with a 102-yard TD interception return, and the Bengals were 10-4 with two weeks left. By midseason there was a chant coming from the seats. Lou-eee! Lou-eee! Breeden just shook his head. At cornerback, you can get whiplash if you latch your ego to public opinion.

AMBLE. LOUIS BREEDEN flinches when he hears the word. He is doing it more and more, as his confidence swells, but do you have to use that word? "It sounds like you're trying to make up for an ability you might not have," he said. "Offenses do so many things these days, you can't gamble. I've learned to play what I see. If I gamble, it's an honest gamble."

Then: "Of course, winning by as many points as we have this season allows you to be so much more aggressive, more of a . . . gambler."

He backpedals from the word because of his past. While Lott was taking the express train to fame—major college, All-American, first-round pick, rookie sensation—Breeden was taking the long, slow crawl. He was a nobody from nowhere, and it frightens him to think that his painful climb could hinge on so fickle a thing as a gamble.

He didn't start on his high school varsity until his senior year, which meant they couldn't blame him until his last season for a team that didn't win a single game his three years there. When he graduated, there were no recruiters knocking and no tuition money in his parents' bank account. He went to work in a textile mill for two years, where he lost the tip of his

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left thumb to a machine designed to slice coat collars. Feeling trapped in a mill in a small North Carolina town named Hamlet, he drifted to a small college in Durham named North Carolina Central to play baseball. Cincinnati Red scouts were impressed enough with him after a tryout camp to promise to send a scout his next college season. But the N.C. Central baseball program folded.

In football, he was a fourth-string DB wearing tattered pants taped to his body and a jersey two sizes too big, until injuries and one brilliant day of practice forced the coaches to play him. Two-and-a-half years later, he was Cincinnati's seventh-round

choice.

He promptly pulled a hamstring and missed his entire 1977 rookie season, then was slapped into the starting left-cornerback position the next year when all-pro Lemar Parrish was traded. The fans wanted Lemar back. Breeden had never played cornerback before and his teammates giggled at his technique. "He took little steps like a penguin," said Ken Riley. "It was the most awkward backpedal I'd ever seen."

"I was thrown to the wolves," Breeden said. "I didn't even know how to bend my knees right. In my first game I gave up the touchdown that became the winning score. Then we played Pittsburgh and we blitzed almost every down, which left me one-on-one with Lynn Swann. He caught five passes and had a touchdown. The next day we were watching the films and the defensive coordinator, Howard Brinker, said, 'Louis, I want to apologize for leaving you alone back there with Swann.' I thought, 'Thanks for telling me now.' I'd do things even I knew were mistakes and nothing was

"I was idolizing the guys I was covering. I was so worried about covering the receiver that I'd just knock down balls that should have been interceptions."

The next time the Bengals played Pittsburgh that season, he held Swann catch-less, made two interceptions and a gang of stunning tackles. "The best game I've ever seen a cornerback play," assistant GM Mike Brown calls it. The Bengals knew then they had a jagged gemstone.

The coaching change that brought Forrest Gregg for 1980 also brought a new defensive coordinator (Hank Bullough) and a secondary coach named Dick LeBeau, who had been to the Pro Bowl three times as a cornerback.

Breeden began to learn nuances, but still lacked consistency. He had three interceptions in the next-to-last game in 1980 against Chicago, and encored by allowing two touchdown passes the next week against Cleveland. This year he got a more malicious pass rush to work behind, another year of confidence and LeBeau, and it all meshed.

"If there are better cornerbacks in the league," said Mike Brown, "they don't jump to my mind very fast."

HE LIGHT MONDAY WORKOUT was over, except for the Bengals still playing Wiffle Ball at one end of the field and the defensive backs playing "burglar" at the other. A Jugs machine, football's equivalent of the Iron Mike, was spitting out 30-yard passes so they could work on stealing the ball. As they finished and filed into the locker room, Ken Riley began jabbing Breeden about the pass Louis nearly intercepted against Brown receiver Ricky Feacher the day before.

"That was a peewee," said Riley, using the Bengal slang for a ball that should have been stolen.

"No way," argued Breeden.

"Yeah, it was," said Riley. "That'll cost you a quarter."

The Bengals charge a quarter for every potential interception dropped during games or practices. Through his tentativeness, Breeden has contributed to some wonderful season-ending team parties in past years.

He was one of the early casualties of the rules changes, but they came early enough in his career for him to adapt. Now he is becoming a convert to the new breed.

"It all stems from confidence," said the 28-year-old cornerback. "I'm beginning to think a lot more about interceptions. When the ball's in the air, I become the receiver. If the receiver makes his move and you keep just the right cushion between him and you, then you know right away you can go for it. The other guy has to stop you now."

On November 8, the Chargers couldn't. Four yards from a touchdown that would have put them within striking distance at the end of the first half, Dan Fouts flung a pass to Charlie Joiner and Louis Breeden became the receiver.

He grabbed the pass, Joiner grabbed him, and Bengal lineman Wilson Whitley knocked the Charger off. Then Breeden kicked in his 4.5 speed. Wes Chandler closed within four yards on the Charger 35 but never got closer. Breeden was too tired to do a backward dunk over the goalpost, as he had fantasized. Dick LeBeau called the play the turning point in the Bengal season.

Breeden made one other steal that game, and the next day was invited to a Cincinnati TV studio for an interview. A custodian there didn't recognize him. "You see that game yester, day?" he asked Louis. "That Breeden got beat all day before that 102-yard return."

The sportscaster came along and introduced the custodian to Louis Breeden.

"Oh."

Cornerbacks are starting to get even ... but they'll never get comfortable.

ecember 6. The Two shocks of 1981, the 49ers and Bengals, meet in Cincinnati. With San Francisco receiver Freddie Solomon injured, quarterback Joe Montana stays away from Louis Breeden's side and feeds Dwight Clark and his running backs.

Ronnie Lott gets no such breather. Early in the first quarter, with the Bengals driving, he reaches up and takes a swat like a bear at a pass over the middle to Isaac Curtis. The deflected ball hangs in the air, Lott whirls and plucks it, then the bear becomes a panther on a 13-yard sprint up the sideline. The 49ers quickly score.

In the third quarter, Cincy on the 49er 35, Lott lowers his helmet to plow Pete Johnson and the ball pops out to a 49er linebacker.

In the fourth quarter, rather than tackle Bengal tight end Dan Ross after a reception, Lott gambles, reaches around him and taps the ball out of his hands to a 49er teammate. The 49ers quickly score.

Final score: 49ers 21, Bengals 3, Lott one interception, two caused fumbles, 10 tackles and one more step toward recognition as the very best of the new breed.

"Look," says Lott, "we're playing with a loaded revolver back there, but you got to keep reloading it and play the game. If you don't, somebody's going to reload it for you and put bullets in all six chambers of that sucker, and it's going to go off all the time. I think defensive backs are starting to do that. I think the trend is starting to turn."

The new cornerback's defensive tactics made Ronnie Lott smile. Armed robbery—using the others guy's weapon.

BEWARE OF THE DOGS

By Pete Axthelm

RUMS ROLL AND trumpets blare. A deep baritone voice utters reverent tributes to "giants of their eras" or "gods who stalked the earth." Grand, heroic figures move in ponderous slow motion across a misty screen. Jim Taylor of the Packers. Larry Csonka of the onceperfect Dolphins. Franco Harris when he was younger and the Steelers won four Super Bowls. If these men and their teams had not existed, NFL Films would have had to invent them. They represented an old-fashioned John Wayne style of justice-a state in which pro football made sense, good teams beat bad ones and a highlight film looked a lot like a morality play. Just the right fare for this season, as we await Super Bowl XVI. . . .

Cut. Destroy the negatives. They no longer apply. I am introducing to football bettors a new version of NFL highlights, in which the initials stand for Nefarious Finance and Loan. To get ready for a modern Super Bowl, a gambler can no longer hail the mighty stars of the past or reach for new superlatives. For Nefarious Finance and Loan's pre-Super Bowl package, the background music is a George Jones tune as sung to a bookie: "These are a few of my favorite lies." The voice-over is by Woody Allen. The script, naturally, makes no sense.

If this assessment sounds harsh, consider that with one week remaining in the regular season, there existed the possibility that the National Conference championship game could feature Tampa Bay against Green Bay. This is a match up that a good many gam-

blers refer to as the Bay of Pigs.

For weeks now, the questions have heated up: Who's going to win the Super Bowl? And why? Unfortunately, the answers cool things off quickly. The big winner will be the team that is healthiest and luckiest down the stretch. Forget the old talks of repeat champions and dynasties. A modern contender will be delighted with a modest streak of three or four victories—as long as they come in the last three or four postseason games.

Alert bettors should have absorbed this message a year ago, when the Oakland Raiders became the second team ever to win the Super Bowl without winning a division title. At the time, it was a joy to admire the guile and craft of Al Davis and his guys in black. But if we had also taken the trouble to dissect the Raiders' playoff success, we might have been better prepared to profit from their collapse early this season.

The Raiders beat Houston in the wild-card game by taking full advantage of their familiarity with the weaknesses of their former teammate, Oiler quarterback Ken Stabler. They edged Cleveland on a last-minute interception under conditions so icy that any result would have been inconclusive. They not only devised a sharp game plan to beat the Chargers, but they got astonishing luck when rain soaked the San Diego field the night before the game. That streak of good fortune had them so high that the Eagles were easy prey in New Orleans.

In retrospect, the Raiders had a lot of proud old guys who rose up to grab one more Super Bowl ring. This fall they just looked like a lot of old guys. A year ago they were also remarkably healthy. They appeared different when injuries struck this season. In other words, the Super Bowl Raiders, like most modern teams, were a mix of myth and fact. Bettors who overindulged in the myths paid the price this season when Oakland suffered five straight point-spread losses.

With that cautionary tale in mind, a dedicated handicapper should begin the drive to the Super Bowl by trying to discern the mirages surrounding some ongoing theories about methods, trends and teams. Just remember that this year's mirage can always turn out to be next year's reality.

MIRAGE OF THE YEAR, 1981: "YOU don't win in the sophisticated NFL with an untried young quarterback.' Eric Hipple, a second-year man who hadn't thrown a pass as a rookie, became Detroit's starter in the seventh game. His first nine weeks he was 6-3 against the spread-including a 48-17 Monday night triumph in his debut. The St. Louis Cardinals were 3-7 when they resorted to rookie Neil Lomax. He led them to four wins in a row before losing to the Giants. Then there was Seattle free-agent Dave Krieg, from tiny Milton College in Wisconsin. He picked the Jets apart as the Seahawks, nine-point underdogs at home, won the game before losing to the Broncos in Denver. Anyone who defied logic and climbed aboard those three kids would be 11-5 against the points.

Other young passers have had mixed results, but the balance sheet indicates that the present rules favor passers enough to allow even inexperienced ones to flourish. This does not necessarily mean that if Dan Fouts is hurt, Ed Luther will lead San Diego to the Super Bowl. Or does it?

MIRAGE OF EVERY YEAR: THE PREvent. The best coach in the sport should know better. But even Don Shula succumbed to the Prevent temptation this season. With the Jets trailing his Dolphins 15-9 in New York, Shula used a three-man pass rush on most plays in the final drive. It wasn't the extreme Prevent that destroys so many teams and their backers, but it was enough to do in the Dolphins. Only their bettors got a consolation: Miami covered the 2½-point spread.

A worse case involved the undisputed Mirage Team of the Year, the Atlanta Falcons. Favorites to win the NFC, they were 7-7. And they summed up the season for many bettors in one game that should be savored and re-

played in the mind and heart of anyone entering the postseason.

In the 13th week of the season, the Falcons were favored by four points in Houston. Because I picked them, I'll retell it from the Atlanta viewpoint. The Falcons led 31-13 in the second half when the first bad thing happened. The Oilers replaced the oncegreat, worn-out Stabler with their best passer, Gifford Nielsen. Against a relaxed defense, Nielsen soon got back one touchdown. The Atlanta offense got conservative, and with about three minutes to go, the Oilers were threatening again. A defensive holding penalty put the ball on Atlanta's 10. Three downs and the Oilers only moved to the three. Then Nielsen lofted a looping pass toward the back of the end zone. Two defenders leaped. So did reserve running back Adger Arm-

strong. This was not Kenny Burrough or Mike Renfro; it was Adger Armstrong who made the tumbling acrobatic catch that made the score 31-27.

That wasn't all. Atlanta ran three plays and punted and the Oilers had a last desperate chance to win. Atlanta bettors also had a 100-1 prayer of covering: The Falcons would have to intercept and run it in for a score. Nielsen threw. Cornerback Bobby Butler picked it off and raced down the sideline for a miracle touchdown. Atlanta bettors from Maine to Spain, including this one, went into assorted victory dances and paroxysms of joy. Then the zebras huddled and ruled that Butler had landed a toe out of bounds on the 12. From there, Steve

Bartkowski fell on the ball to run out the clock.

As sorry as I felt for my fellow Falcon backers, I'm even sadder for anyone who salvaged a gift "push" with Houston. Those guys are going into the playoffs unprotected. They used up all of their luck in week 13.

The All-Mirage quarterback is Minnesota's Tommy Kramer, the free-spirited thrower whose scatter-gun attack often keeps both teams in the game. Augmented by the Vikings' erratic defense, Kramer is a risky proposition when his team figures to win. In

their battle to survive in the NFC Central, where almost everyone is careening from various directions toward the magic .500 level, the Vikings were favored six times. They covered only twice and lost three times outright.

As an underdog, though, Kramer is a joy. His two-minute drills are crisp and effective—and particularly devastating against the Prevent. As a result, he is a master of the "meaningless" late touchdown that fails to win the game but covers the spread. Kramer didn't lose in the first six games he started as an underdog, and four were outright wins. But long-suffering bettors specially savor the other two. On Monday nights when he was trailing in the final minutes, Kramer salvaged the point spread in losses to Denver and Atlanta.

San Francisco's Bill Walsh is prob-

ably the real-life Coach of the Year. But he also earned a Mirage Award, with oak-leaf clusters, for his sleight of hand before the 49ers' game at Cincinnati. Walsh hinted that because the 49ers had clinched their division, he might rest some key people, including Joe Montana and Fred Dean. The Bengals may or may not have been lulled into overconfidence by the ploy. But many bettors certainly were. The point spread on the favored Bengals soared from 6 to 7¹/₂.

Walsh's statement turned out to be the mirage. Cincinnati found San Francisco all too real. Montana and Dean played, and the 49ers won 21-3. One nagging question remained, even for winners: Since Walsh would have been subject to possible disciplinary action for falsifying an injury report about Montana and Dean, should the NFL security force inquire into his possibly misleading "resting" reports? Gamblers were surely the furthest things from his mind in this affair. But the league does recognize the need for public disclosure about personnel changes. The game has enough built-in illusions these days without letting the coaches throw up their own smoke screen.

THE MONDAY NIGHT ROUT MIRAGE: Beware of teams that look particularly awesome or awful on *Monday Night* Football. Because the entire country

watches, bettors tend to overreact the next week. It often becomes a shrewd move to bet against the team that looked so good and with the one that drew the wrath of Howard.

Four Monday nighters this season were decided by 20 points or more. Three of those winners returned the next week to lose to the spread. Three of the losers won, two in shocking fashion. Chicago, nationally humiliated by Detroit, bounced back to win outright over 10point favorite San Diego. The same Chargers disgraced themselves in Seattle and recovered to score 55 points in Oakland. When a mirage turns into a 75 per cent winning angle, you've suddenly stumbled happily into a reality.

This angle might be the best thing gleaned from a confusing season. It's too bad it won't help us in the playoffs, where all games get national exposure and none are played on Monday. So from now until the final hour in Pontiac, in the felicitous phrase of Tom T. Hall, "We're all in this thing ... alone." Only one suggestion endures to help us through the Super Bowl and the seasons beyond. Remember the Raiders: Don't believe everything you see.

PETE AXTHELM is a Newsweek columnist.

VICTORY

By Ron Powers

BS FIGURES IT WILL NEED 23 television cameras to cover the Super Bowl in Detroit's Silverdome. That is eight more cameras than NBC needed for last year's Super Bowl. It is 11 more cameras than CBS needed for the 1980 Republican National Convention.

(Some analysts calculate that it is 19 more cameras than CBS might have needed to cover the Creation-three to track the nine planets and one to isolate on the sun-but we will never know; the Creation fell on an oddnumbered year.)

"Twenty-three cameras," says Terry O'Neil, the way other men might say, "The Defense budget," or, "Look-a million-dollar bill." Terry O'Neil is the 32-year-old, fast-rising executive who will mastermind the telecast of Super Bowl XVI, playing George Lucas to CBS's 20th Century-Fox.

Typical of a new breed of smart young sports producers out of ABC's Roone Arledge/Chet Forte incubator. O'Neil moved over to CBS a year ago. Instead of blown-up action photos, there are Monet prints on his office walls; his idea of a good spectator sport is ballet. O'Neil has never attended a Super Bowl. But with the ordnance he has been granted from CBS, he expects to make XVI a definitive telecast.

"It's a blank check," concedes O'Neil, and then a look of Responsible Self-Restraint spreads across his choirboy face. "I honestly don't know where I could put another camera," he adds, piously. "The great danger is of over-producing the game."

How true. The great danger of lacing Europe with medium-range nuclear missiles would be of making the Soviets testy. One can't be too prudent in these times of limited options.

There are getting to be two Super Bowls. The lesser, if better-known one, is played each year by two competent professional football teams that have escaped the regular season less maimed and broken than most other clubs, and that generally pursue game plans that could have been scribbled on a tea napkin by Margaret Thatcher.

The real Super Bowl-the serious one-is waged on alternate Januaries by intelligent men in turtlenecks and blazers from the sports divisions of CBS and NBC. Super Bowl telecasts are the ultimate tests of corporate macho between these organizations. And although NBC has dominated this esoteric duel in seasons past, the Eye could be poised for an assault on the Peacock's laurels.

Think about that 23-camera arsenal. Combined with 11 videotape replay machines, extra crew, additional graphics and other incidental costs, it will swell CBS's Super budget to \$2 million, up from \$1.3 million in 1980. And the total market value of the equipment CBS will be using is \$10 million. (NBC spent \$1 million in production costs a year ago, and used equipment valued at \$6 million.) On nonsuper Sunday afternoons, both CBS and NBC get along quite nicely, thank you, with five to eight cameras and three to five videotape machines.

And, look: No one at either network even goes through the motions of pretending that the extra hardware in January is necessary to attract viewers.

Give us a break, puh-leeze. The Super Bowl is America's definitive presold television event. Last year almost half of your fellow citizens stared at it. So why push video technology to its expensive limit if the viewers are already in their seats and glassy-eyed?

And there's still more evidence: In their private moments, network sports executives admit to the cynical belief that most viewers-hell, most television critics-couldn't tell the difference between an ABC, a CBS or an NBC football telecast if you put a piece of tape over the channel selector.

"But the trade knows," purrs a top NBC Sports programmer, "and that's really why we go to all the trouble. Self-satisfaction is our reward."

And how far will the competing sports divisions go to achieve this selfsatisfaction? Consider the Louma.

NBC Sports unveiled the Louma during its coverage of XV in 1981. At that time, it was the most exotic gadget to find its way inside a stadium since the blimp in Black Sunday.

Imagine an enormous drinking straw with a wad of chewing gum stuck on the end. Now imagine a cost of something like \$10,000 per usage. You have imagined the Louma. There are two in this country. The Louma is a crane with a television camera attached to its long arm. It is operated, marionette-style, by two men-one who pans and tilts the camera, the other who zooms the lens in and out.

The Louma is primarily a movie device. NBC's Ted Nathanson, a veteran Super Bowl director, adapted it for TV sports to exploit an advantage his network already held over CBS-a superiority in getting reaction shots. "We are prohibited from physically crossing the dotted yellow lines around the team bench during a game. I was able to extend the Louma out over the bench and point it back at the players' and coaches' faces. I got reaction shots that you've never seen before."

If those reaction shots included a coach's girlish shriek of horror upon suddenly being confronted by an upside-down metallic ostrich in the midst of a field-goal attempt, Nathanson was

too diplomatic to say.

But never mind the Louma. Now it's Super Bowl XVI, and CBS has counterattacked. The Eye's new weapon virtually affirms the networks' inside warfare, their video Super Bowl.

On Terry O'Neil's stadium chart, it looks innocuous enough-Camera No. 16, a stationary lens that will be mounted halfway up the Silverdome, above the 50-yard line. It is the nickname of this piece of equipment that is designed to send stabs of pain shooting through executive stomachs at NBC. "We call it the 'Renfro' camera," says O'Neil, poker-faced.

Saying "Renfro" to an NBC Sports producer is like saying "Dracula" to a resident of the Borgo Pass. Two years ago, when Pittsburgh defeated Houston in the AFC championship game, Oiler wide receiver Mike Renfro juggled a game-tying touchdown pass as he crossed the back line of the end zone. After a confused delay, the officials ruled the pass incomplete. But NBC commentators Dick Enberg and Merlin Olsen asserted boldly that the officials had blown the call—that Renfro had possession of the ball.

Could the videotape back them up? Not really. As the Peacock's director in the remote van scrambled to replay

the action from every available angle, the same rear views of the same sweaty jerseys continued to clog the screen. Since no camera was in a clear position to settle the issue for the home viewers, NBC was at a loss on the game's turning point.

"The Renfro camera will protect us from this kind of situation," assures O'Neil—thus implicitly pointing out another, almost Freudian motivation for saturating a Super Bowl with hardware: Fear of Blowing the Big Play.

(Alert viewers, of course, will recognize the Renfro as nothing more nor less than the "reverse-angle replay" camera that ABC installed on the opposite side of the field for its Monday night telecasts this season. CBS had a reverse-field cam-

era available during XIV but it was used mainly for reaction shots. The Renfro means business.)

Not even the 90-minute pregame show will be immune from CBS's Invasion of the Cameraoids. In past years, Super Bowl pregame shows have often seemed perverse attempts to lure the audience away from the telecast—fans screaming in bars, Le-Roy Neiman doodling. This year, CBS will simply rush the pregame festivities like a SWAT team. Phyllis George will roam the stands, seeking out celebrities for live interviews. Irv Cross

will prowl the field to "follow the flow" of the teams as they go through their warmups. Brent Musburger and Jimmy the Greek will brood upon these spectacles from the lofty CBS anchor set in the stadium club. CBS will add a third camera to this area to capture glimpses of rich people eating.

TERRY O'NEIL UNDERSTANDS THAT his network's Super Bowl performance will not depend, ultimately, on sheer hardware, or on cute gimmicks such as the Renfro. He knows that there are important differences in the way NBC and CBS have telecast games. CBS Sports has been the artistic underdog for years; its deficiencies are well known to everyone on both sides.

CBS has been chided in "the trade" for its rigidly outdated camera placement (the primary-action lenses

GOT!

stacked on the 50-yard line), for its directors' peculiar penchant for missing the critical reaction shots that give a football telecast its lifeblood as theater, and for its game announcers' nothanks attitude toward attending proteams' practice sessions. CBS's decision to break up the popular tandem of Pat Summerall and Tom Brookshier this past season was largely due, insiders admit, to this very truancy. The lack of background preparation had become too obvious on Sundays.

The reasons for this carelessness are partly historic: CBS Television has never taken sports quite as seriously as it has news. So there is irony that it took a career TV newsman—Van Gordon Sauter, en route to the presidency of CBS News—to begin shaking the lethargy out of the sports division during his 17-month tour there. Sauter spread out the sideline cameras. He shook up the announcing teams. And he recruited talent such as O'Neil.

Perhaps O'Neil's most important contribution to the way Super Bowl XVI will look on the home screen—more important, even, than those 23 cameras—will prove to have been an internal organizational rescue mission. He has relieved some of the hellish pressure on the CBS game director by transferring some responsibility to his own shoulders.

"In the past," O'Neil says, "the CBS director simultaneously 'cut' the

live video [going from camera to camera]; decided what players to isolate on and which of the five replay machines to activate; talked to the game announcers; listened to the game announcers; selected the graphics." All of this on every snap. Many CBS directors, it is said, retire to the peaceful life of an air traffic controller.

But this January, O'Neil himself will be supervising the replays, communicating with Summerall and John Madden, and supervising the graphics. This will restore a sense of balance. O'Neil believes, to the CBS "look" of the game, freeing the director to pursue those all-important reaction shots (a freshly sacked OB, a disbelieving coach, a runnynosed cheerleader).

And all—or largely, anyway—for the edification of NBC—which began planning its *own* definitive Super Bowl telecast one month after XV ended.

Maybe NBC will come out with cameras in every player's home. Maybe the players will interview one another between downs. Or maybe the next Super Bowl will not feature live players at all—but rather the Louma facing the Renfro for all the marbles: the ultimate double coverage.

RON POWERS is a TV-and-radio critic who received a Pulitzer Prize.

THE COWBOYS' TOP HAND

It usually takes two to tangle with Randy White, but the NFL's best defensive lineman has a soft spot

"The thing that makes Randy White who he is out there is that he is scared to death of embarrassing himself."

—ERNIE STAUTNER, Dallas defensive coordinator

"If he's made one bad play in the game, he won't say a word to me all the way home."

-VICCI WHITE

HE DOCTOR IS STANDING outside the showers at the Cowboy practice field, talking about what a fragile thing a reputation can be in the National Football League.

Randy White is sitting on a bench beneath him, listening, absently smoothing out a broken toe.

"I'll tell you about this Kenny Stabler talk," the doctor says, "it's horseshit." He is an old rooster, but he knows what he knows. "You might be talkin' to so and so, that don't mean you're associated in his private bi'niss. How do you know that some commission said somebody is a known gambler?

"I'll tell you how easy it can happen. I was standin' on the sidelines, watchin' that ex'bishon game where the officials wasn't calling nothing against them, just us. Suddenly this old boy I barely know comes up and says, 'Doc, I got to have your signature on this here paper.'

"I look down and it's a state health certificate, so's he can get his barber's license renewed..." The old doctor looks down at his hands to show where the certificate was, and in doing that he notices the long toe on Randy White's left foot. White is in front of his locker with his shoes and socks off, still listening to the story. His toe is purple and black and swollen, and maybe a little infected out by the nail. He smooths it again as he listens, straightening it, working with his right hand. The ring finger is broken and looks worse than the toe.

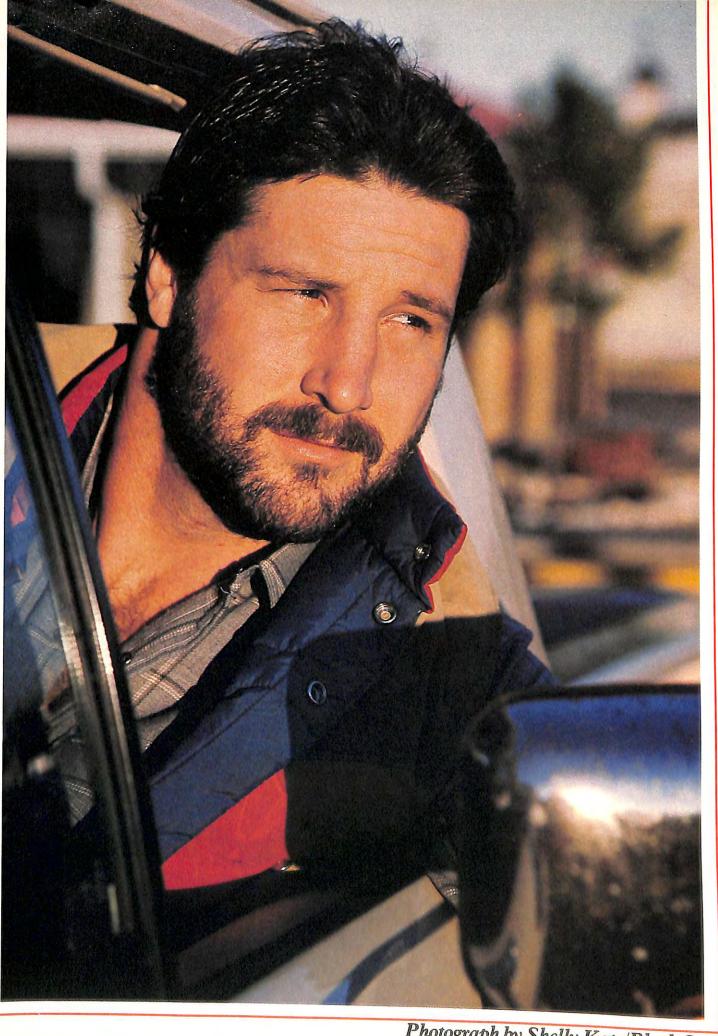
The doctor bends over easier than you would have thought and begins to pull at the toe, too. "I says to him, 'I can't sign nothin' like this. It says I got certain knowledge that you don't have gonorrhea."

He looks up into White's face and says, "That hurt?" Randy White shrugs. Charlie Waters is looking over his shoulder, shaking his head yes.

The doctor pulls the toe the other way. White shakes his head no. The doctor tells him to put the foot flat on the floor, and then pulls the toe straight up. Waters closes his eyes.

"The fella says to me, 'Doc, you know I don't have no gonorrhea,' and I says, 'How would I know somethin' like that without lookin'?' And I'll tell

By Pete Dexter



Photograph by Shelly Katz/Black Star

you, boys, I almost signed that paper. But then I said, 'What if it was to come out later you did, and the gov-ment comes back to me and says we thought you said he didn't. Where does that leave me?'

"He's mad at me, but you got to be careful in this bi'niss. You get the league lookin' into connections with diseased barbers, you got a newspaper scandal..."

He looks up into White's face again,

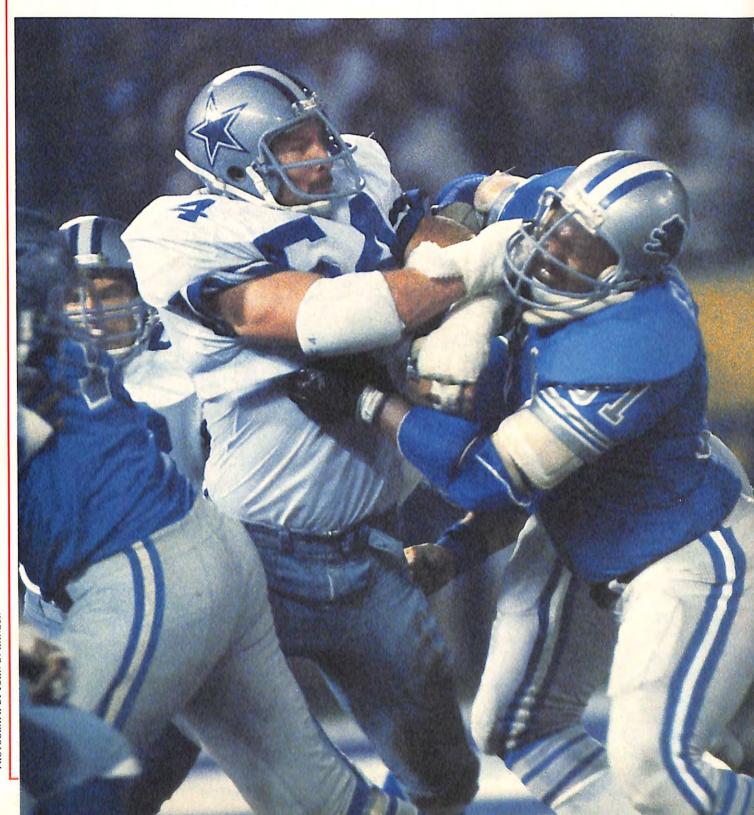
pulling the toe—which looks like it could have caught something off a diseased barber—in a way that might break a standard toe off. White watches him, but judging by the expression on his face, the toe could belong to somebody else.

The old doctor straightens up—it's harder than getting down was—and looks around for new patients. Waters curls his toes under his feet and runs into the shower saying, "Goddamn,

I'm glad I'm not a lineman."

ORDAN WHITE IS $2\frac{1}{2}$, AND BIG enough to be a year older. She has her mother's hair, her mother's eyes, some of her mother's expression. Somehow it all reminds you of her father. She runs from one end of the locker room to the other, shrieking, chasing John Dutton's kid, Mason.

They scream and spill Cokes and



run into walls. Dutton and Randy White watch. Every now and then Randy asks Jordan if she has to go to the bathroom. She says no.

He says, "Are you sure?"

She says no.

He says, "All right, you let me know if you do."

One of the older players is sitting a few feet away, talking about discipline. "I had a doctor tell me about this kid they brought into the hospital," he

says. "It was a nice family, real good people and all, but the kid came in with a dislocated hip. Pitiful, the way he looked. The father'd hit him with his hand."

Something crosses White's face. The older player says, "The doctor told me, 'Use a belt or a stick, anything you want, but don't ever hit your kid with your hand. That's how they get hurt...'" The player hears himself now, stops. He looks around, but no-

body is looking at him like he might have been talking about his own boy. "The doctor said it was a real good family," he says.

The next time Jordan comes by, White picks her up and hugs her against his cheek while she kicks him in the knees. The kid, as they say on Monday Night Football, has excellent acceleration of foot. Randy White smiles. "I tried smacking her on the butt once or twice," he says, "just to show her I wasn't afraid to do it. She kicked me..."

His smile changes. "Jordan," he says, "did you go to the bathroom?"

Jordan says yup. White checks. "Why didn't you tell me?" he says.

She says, "I don't tell, I just do it."
White shrugs. He understands that as well as anybody.

ANDY WHITE WAS THE SECond man picked in the draft of
1975, behind quarterback
Steve Bartkowski of the Falcons. He had been an AllAmerican defensive end at Maryland,
but the Cowboys studied his quickness
and speed and strength and decided he
was the new Lee Roy Jordan. Jordan
had been the middle linebacker for the
Cowboys almost as long as there had
been Cowboys.

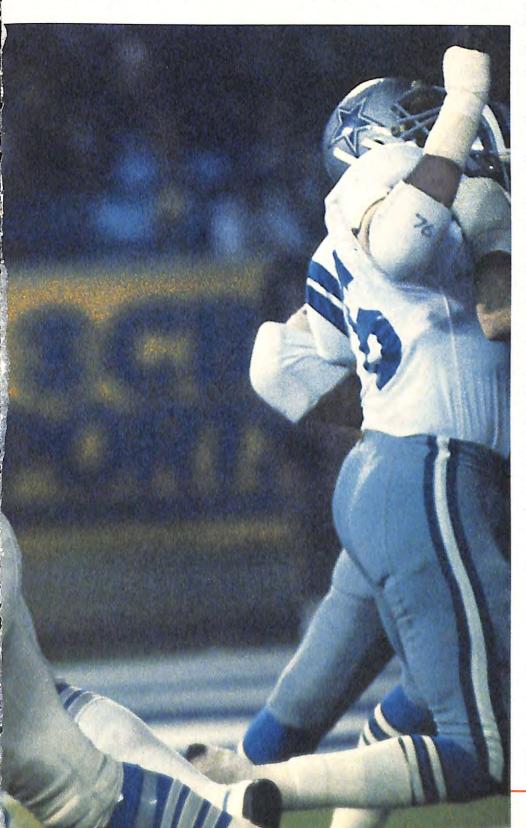
It didn't work out. Even though he'd played linebacker (and running back) in high school, the pass drops were unnatural, the whole idea of backing up was unnatural. "At first I was confused by the system," he says, "then I was embarrassed. Finally, coach Landry came over one day and asked what I thought of trying it at defensive tackle. I said I didn't care where it was, as long as I played."

White moved to weak-side tackle and was immediately one of the most effective and complete players in football. A poll of NFL coaches in the late '70s asked: What one player would you choose right now to start a new football franchise? Randy White was two-to-

one over anybody else.

A beat reporter for the *Philadelphia Daily News* remembers sitting in the Eagle projection room with the coaching staff in 1979, watching films. "For half an hour," he said, "everybody just watched films of the Dallas games, asking each other if they could believe what they were seeing. For 30 minutes, they didn't even try to figure out what they were going to do with him,

Quickness, opponents say, is what gives White an edge



they just sat there talking about how good he was."

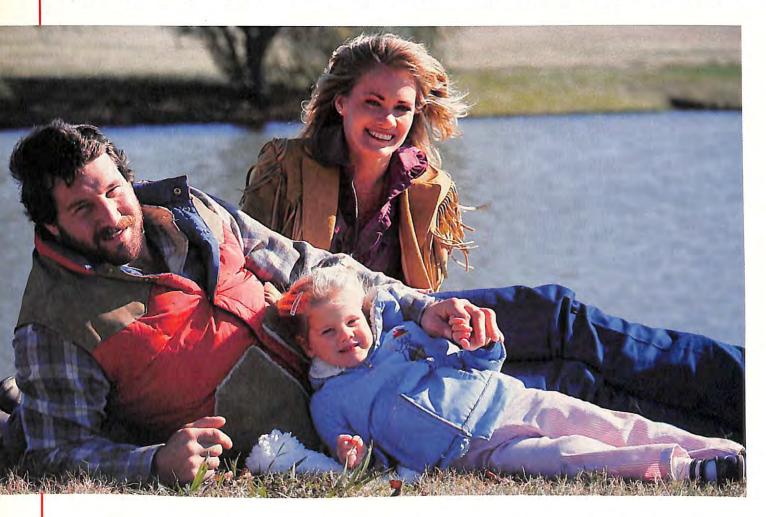
Before the end of his first season at tackle, White was being called the best defensive lineman in football. He was also called "Manster" (half-man, half-monster), "inhuman," "unstoppable." "Every time a guy wrote something like that," he says, "I'd line up at the beginning of the next game and there was somebody across the line looking at me with those razor-blade eyes. It makes you want to say, 'Hey, you

about it again, gives up. "I can't explain, I just do what I do."

HAT RANDY WHITE DOES, more than any other defensive lineman in football, is control the game. Playing the weak side of the Dallas flex defense, he lines up a yard off the ball, both hands on the ground, and then penetrates—maybe three yards—looking for something to tackle. He waits in the pile of bodies he has accu-

his quickness that beats you. You can know exactly what he's going to do, and he can still do it. You watch game films Monday to Saturday, and that doesn't make you feel any better either. He comes and he comes and he comes. Hard, every play, time after time. It doesn't matter what the score is, or if 10 seconds are left in the game.

"He rises up out of his stance and, I don't know, it seems to paralyze you. He gives you a little shake, and you see his feet moving so fast—pitty-pat,



didn't believe that crap in the paper, did you?""

White played most of the '79 season with foot injuries, missing one game—the only game he has missed in his career. He was the Cowboys' only allpro then and he repeated in 1980. "People ask about playing that way," he says. "I don't know what to say. I did it because I wanted to do it. Nobody makes you play hurt—all that stuff about being forced is crap; you decide for yourself."

He thinks for a minute, shakes his head. He shrugs. "So much of pain is a learned response, it's amazing the things you can ignore." He thinks

mulated until there is no possible way the play can come back through his area, and then he chases the ball.

On most plays he is tying up two blockers, sometimes three. He is the most double-teamed man in football, which leaves the linebackers and ends most of the sacks and single tackles.

On some plays, though, the Cowboys put him right on the offensive guard's nose and let him come. Eagles' Petey Perot: "The thing about Randy is his quickness. He's got huge upper body strength [White is the strongest of the Cowboys. He has bench-pressed 480 pounds and once, in a team contest, did 450 pounds 10 times], but it's

Wife Vicci, daughter Jordan: The spot where he is softest

pitty-pat—and you think you got your arms up, but then you don't. He gives you maybe two moves and an armover, and there he goes."

Perot stops for a minute. "I guess he thinks I've given him some cheap shots. He's said some things, you know, but all I can do is go out there and try as hard as I can, too."

Randy White: "Right after a game in Philly last year, I was coming off the field and somebody asked me about Petey Perot. I was still hot—

he'd blocked down on my knees [from the side] which can end your career—and I said something like, 'He's the cheapest shot in the league.' I just said it on the spur of the moment, and the next day there it was in the newspaper. 'White Says Perot Cheap Shot.'

"I wished to hell they'd given me a couple of minutes before they'd asked. I mean, whatever happens out there, you take care of it yourself. You remember it, and sometime later it comes due. You don't go complaining about it to the press and the public. It probably embarrassed Petey Perot, and it sure as hell embarrassed me. That's not the way a man does business."

ARLY IN THE SEASON, 1980, the Cowboys at Denver. The phone call came in late at night, after it was too late to get a plane back to Wilmington, Delaware, anyway. Guy White had died of cancer. He'd had it a while; Randy had spent 24-hour days at the hospital, watching what it did.

"He was a butcher," White says. "He never pushed any of us into anything. When World War II started he joined up with the paratroopers. He was a sergeant. Later, he played some football at West Chester State. Whatever he did, he did it right.

"That's the way it was with his kids. He never said, 'Do this,' or 'Do that,' but once you started something he made you finish it. If you cut the grass, you cut the whole grass. You didn't stop in the middle and finish later. If you wanted to play football, then you did that all the way, too.

"He got out of the war and had to go to work. He got to be a butcher and he married LaVerne, bought a little three-bedroom ranch house in Delaware and had a family. Six days a week he walked out the door in the morning and drove to work. Afterwards, he'd have a couple of beers and come home, eat supper, and then he'd go to work in the morning again."

On the day his father died, White played the game telling only Tom Landry and a few others what had happened. When he'd finished work, he caught another plane and went home for the funeral.

ANDY WHITE WAS BORN IN Pittsburgh and grew up in Prices Corner, just outside Wilmington. His mother and father had gone to grade school together. LaVerne and Guy. "Everybody always called Randy's father 'Junior,' "LaVerne said. "When

he was 50 years old, little kids were still calling him that. When Randy was born, we decided we didn't want to hang any nicknames on him that would follow him around when he was 50, so we chose a name nobody else in the family had.

"We named him Randy and we called him Hunk."

Guy and LaVerne had three children in 33 months. Randy, then Cindy, then Eric. "The thing you could always say about Randy, even when he was a baby, he knew what he wanted," LaVerne said. "Christmas, for instance, he might only ask for one thing. A punching bag or a BB gun or something, he could always tell you.

"Eric was cocky, being the younger brother and all. And Cindy fell in the middle, the peacemaker. Poor Cindy. There were arguments, like any other family, but no matter what was said between us, nobody outside could say anything and get away with it.

"We went to all the games, me and Guy and the family. I was always the loudest one in the stadium. Now, well, things change. Kids get older, they mature, people die. Me? I'm still the loudest one in the stadium...."

saw Randy on the bottom of a fight was right after we'd seen a John Wayne movie," his brother said. "You remember how Wayne used to grab a guy's shirt, stick his foot in his stomach and roll back and throw him over his head? Well, Randy tried that and the guy landed on top of him. I don't know what would have happened, because I looked up and there was mother, coming around the corner. She pulled the kid off—we were pretty small then—and sent us home."

Eric White was faster than his brother, maybe stronger for his size. He played football and wrestled in high school, but quit college for a construction job before he'd finished a semester.

"I always believed I had the same kind of potential Randy did," he says. "I'm as fast as guys like Dorsett, I could be that, but I didn't want to wake up some morning 34 in a 65-year-old body. Arthritis and bad knees. . . .

"We had a competition between us, but it was friendly. Randy was always the toughest kid in his class, and some-body from another neighborhood or another school always wanted to fight him. He'd look at most of them and say, 'My little brother can kick your ass,' and when I'd walk out of school

he'd have my fights all lined up for me. I'd fight who he said, and if I wasn't winning, Randy'd jump in and kill them.

"It used to tear him up when I wrestled. There were a lot of times he'd get into it with somebody in the stands. Cops'd come in and break it up. I remember a match I had with this black kid who was supposed to beat me. We were the two best 190-pounders in the state, and his father came to the meet when we wrestled. A great big guy, must have weighed 300 pounds. He was standing along the sidelines near Randy when the match started.

"I don't know what they said to each other, but a minute or so into it I knew I was going to win, but I also had this feeling nobody was watching. A real strange feeling. Then I looked up and there's Randy getting into it with this guy right there on the floor. I started to watch it, too. I was laughing, and then the guy tried to reverse me or something and I never did get to see the end of it. I always wondered what they used to break it up."

White's reputation for trouble is still impressive in Delaware, although most of the reason for it ended about the time he went to the Cowboys. Partly, as he says, because you grow up and partly because when you're Randy White you probably run out of people to have trouble with.

"It was about the time he went into the pros that he seemed to quiet down," Cindy says. "He never changed though, not what mattered. It never went to his head. When I got married, he wouldn't even sit down in the front row, much less be in the wedding. He said it was my day, and he didn't want people coming there to see him."

That was four years ago. Cindy has a baby now, she works nights in fine jewelry in a department store.

Eric lives on his brother's farm, he works for a printer. Seven years on the same job. "People watch Randy do something on television, they say, 'Can you believe you saw that?' Well, I believe it because I've seen him do it all my life. I believe it because I could have done it, too."

call real close to anybody on the team," White says. "We go out and eat with John Dutton and his wife now and then, or I'll go bass fishing with him or Kurt Petersen or somebody, but you couldn't say there was anybody close."

White is sitting in jeans and a baitshop hat, pulling on a pair of sneakers after Wednesday's practice. Wednesday is a miserable day of the week to be a Dallas Cowboy. Practice can last all afternoon, the hitting can be pretty hard.

And Randy White practices the way he plays, which doesn't do anything to make it easier. "There's flex responsibilities, and gaps and points of attack," he says, "but in the middle of all that, it's still trying to hit the crap out of the guy you're playing against. You don't ever want to hurt somebody, but practice is football, too."

He stops to watch Harvey Martin walk by. "Harvey came out to the farm one weekend," he says, "met my dog Deacon." The farm is in Landenberg, Pennsylvania, about 30 minutes from Wilmington. The family meets there; sometimes they get together in the kitchen at seven in the morning to cook sausage. White's wife will not set foot on it.

The dog is a Rottweiler—a 140-pound animal with a head you could set a typewriter on. He was named after "Deacon" Visaggio, who played with White at Maryland.

"As soon as Harvey walked in the door, Deac like to eat his ass off," White says. "Don't let anybody ever tell you Harvey isn't fast. And agile. Tables, chairs, a banister—you've never seen a human being with moves like that. The truth is, we never really found out what old Deac wanted with Harvey. Maybe he was just curious.

"Harvey wasn't, I know that. The whole weekend, you'd see him peeking around corners. He'd go, 'Pssst ... Randy, where's the dog, man?'"

White ties his shoes, puts on a jacket and heads out to the parking lot. It is cold and dark outside, and it's raining. Half a dozen women are waiting by the door for autographs. Some of them are towing kids. "It's raining, momma," one of them says. The mother is 32 or 33, 40 pounds overweight. She hands Randy White her autograph book.

"I want a hug, too," she says. White signs the book, lets her hug him and then jogs through the Mercedeses and the Audis to his truck. A black Ford pickup.

He sits there a minute watching the women in the rain. "People are crazy," he says.

He starts the truck, backs it out and heads home. He is comfortable in the truck, his wife is comfortable in the Continental. He likes bait hats, she is a professional model. She likes to be visible, but it's no favor to recognize him in the grocery store or the little barbecue place where he sometimes goes for lunch.

"It happens, people stop you," he says. "Usually, they only want an autograph or to tell you what's wrong with the flex defense. It doesn't matter much, I guess, but then it doesn't happen to me as much as some of the others. I'm not that big-looking, for one thing. I don't stand out." It has been happening more, though, since he did a national television ad for Dannon Yogurt that ended with a beautiful ballerina falling in his arms, and anybody who thinks White is uncultured because he drives a truck and goes bass fishing and sits out on his farm chewing weeds only has to watch him in that piece of film to see that he appreciates ballet.

There is another commercial being filmed now, for 7UP. In this one they might use his wife.

HE DRIVE FROM THE PRACtice field to Randy White's house is half a mile and takes half an hour. Dallas has a system of highways that would just accommodate, say, Valdosta, Georgia. During the trip home the rain doubles and the wind picks up.

"My wife said not to bring you over," he says, "because we're still living in a townhouse. She's trying to get me to buy another place, but I don't know about the financing. We found a house, the price is all right, but in five years I could be out of football and I don't want something I'll have to sell because I can't afford it then. . . . Yeah, sometimes I think about what I'll do then. I haven't come up with anything yet, but I know it's out there. If you can't accept that, you're in the wrong business."

His wife's name is Vicci. She has great cheekbones, long blonde hair, legs, everything. Her father sells boat equipment in Dallas, and you could grow up on the outskirts of Wilmington and never see a girl like this.

And you could grow up in Dallas and hear all your life about football players like Randy White.

She is in the kitchen now, poking at something in the oven. Jordan is watching a cartoon on a giant TV screen. White gets us a couple of beers and sits down at the kitchen table.

"I was just telling Pete you didn't want me to bring him over, Victor," he says. Victor narrows her eyes.

"Randy, I swear. . . . '

He slides over next to her and says,

"Let's go eat some Mexican food."

"What am I supposed to do with what's in the oven?"

He looks at it a minute. Something brown in an aluminum dish. "What were you going to do with it?"

"Besides," she says, "it's raining. Jordan's tired and I've been running around all day in a leotard."

He says, "A day in a leotard knocks the hell out of me, too." He looks over at the child. "You want to go get some Mexican food, Jordan?" Jordan looks over and smiles, kicks at the air.

Vicci looks over and doesn't smile. Razor-blade eyes. "Now, Victor," he says. It's play, but there's an edge to it. Earlier last year the marriage broke up for a few weeks. Lawyers, judges, court orders. "The first time a lawyer told me when I could and couldn't see my own daughter, I wanted to break parts off him," he says. "With women, you always figure you can say, 'To hell with you,' and go fishing. Once there's a baby involved, though. . . ." He makes a face, the kind of face other people make when something hurts.

He says, "I've been afraid of things in my life, like anybody else. I don't mean physically scared, but ever since I started playing football I've been afraid I wouldn't be good enough. Even before high school, right through to the pros. When I knew what I could do, I was afraid I wouldn't do it.

"You always figure, though, that whatever comes up you can handle it, you can always take care of yourself. Then you get a baby and it just lays you wide open."

Vicci takes the dinner out of the oven and puts it in the refrigerator. She puts Jordan in a raincoat and crawls with her into the backseat of the Continental.

White turns on the windshield wipers and pulls carefully away from the curb. Jordan makes a noise that could be a lot of things. Vicci says, "Randy, she's beginning to fuss already."

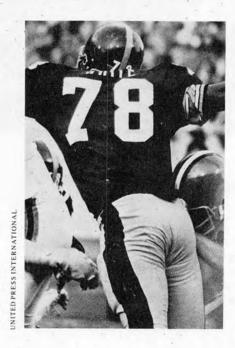
He says, "She will if you say that."
Jordan makes another noise, a kick landing. White smiles and looks into the rearview mirror to make sure things are still all right.

"How you doin', Victor?" he says. In the back it's quiet and dark. "Vic-

He laughs, he shakes his head. He laughs, but all the way there he takes quick looks into the backseat, where it is dark and quiet, where, for all his strength, Randy White is helpless.

PETE DEXTER'S last piece for INSIDE SPORTS was on John Matuszak.

OCCUPANTIONS WARDS TO STREET THE MILITIAN WARDS WERE NOT THE WARDS WARDS



Once they played in a game with Roman numerals stuck on the end. Millions watched, billions were bet. Now, one runs a gold mine in Idaho, another owns five radio stations. One cleans airplanes, another sells raincoats. They all have this in common: Nobody cheers them anymore. Some don't mind.

Photographs by Al Szabo



DWIGHT WHITE By Roy Blount Fr.

t's Sunday afternoon and almost everybody in the Pittsburgh area is watching the Steeler game. But Dwight White, who used to be a rabid Steeler, has it behind him. He hasn't looked at the TV here on his patio since the first quarter, when he switched over to The Wall Street Report. White is peering in the opposite direction, downhill from his backyard in the prosperous suburb of Ross Township, through the telescopic sight of the Winchester 30-06 rifle he says he keeps ready. The Steelers intercept a pass. White pulls the trigger. Click. "Don't make me out to be the mad sniper now."

"Mad Dog" is what they called him when he was the all-pro right end of the Steel Curtain, Super Bowl history's most overwhelming front four. In Super IX White himself flattened Fran Tarkenton to score the first Super Bowl safety and along with Joe Greene, L. C. Greenwood, Ernie "Arrowhead" Holmes (whom White calls the best defensive lineman he ever saw), the linebackers and defensive backs, he held the Vikings to 19 yards rushing. And he had pleurisy at the time. Got out of a hospital bed, played, went straight back to the hospital for two weeks. ("God takes care of fools and little babies," he says.) That was one of four Super Bowls in which he played whole-hog and nasty.

"I was sick," he says with relish and bemusement (mostly relish), and it's not the pleurisy he's talking about. "I'd do anything. Late shot, that didn't mean anything to me. Push your damn face in, that didn't mean anything to me." But off the field he was the youngest-hearted, most ebul-



VIDE WORL



lient on a team of high spirits. Roundfaced, round-bodied (none of the front four looked like a Greek god), orotund and blithe. Now, at 32, in his first season of retirement, he is a stockbroker. He handles security portfolios with the distinguished firm of Bache Halsey Stuart Shields. He was a delegate to President Reagan's Conference on Aging—although he looks about the same, just a little graver, as when he was whooping and dancing with

recovered fumbles.

He can sound like a Republican stockbroker, too. But he hasn't grown staid. "I got an arsenal here," he said. "A black family near here, somebody burned a cross in their yard, and the only one home was a teenage girl and she got so upset she had to go to the hospital.

"People said it was probably just local kids, a prank. But *I* didn't think it was funny. Went to the store and got this gun and the man said, 'Oh . . . Dwight White. Thirty-aught-six. Are

you . . . going to shoot some deers?'

"'Nope."

"'Going . . . hunting?"

" 'Nope.' "

He's ready for them. But it's prudent investors that White really wants to deal with; people who want to "get rich slow." What he tends to run into are people who want to talk about football. He will respond politely and turn the subject to securities and their FAB: Features, Advantages and Benefits.

"Being a football player is nice. But it ain't great in terms of 20 years down the road, can you feed your children? I happen to think that the ultimate test is not to play football, but to be something after football. It's a real challenge to wipe out that image, that stereotype. Everybody I talk to wants to ask me, am I going through withdrawal? 'Don't you miss it?' They want you to be crushed.

"But I'm completely desensitized to it. Whether you're getting out of a hospital bed, or breathing so hard you're breathing blood out of your lungs, busting capillaries just from the intensity of your breathing . . . whatever you do, when it's over it's over. I was proud to be a player. It's a highly skilled employment. But it's men playing a kid's game. I'm more impressed with Wall Street than Three Rivers Stadium.

"I've got a lot of friends on the Steelers, but I never see 'em. We're on a different schedule. In football, you live in a society that's a bubble: Work from 10 to 3, never experience traffic, never know what it's like to eat lunch at 12 o'clock. I'm competing with the majority now. There's not a football player in America up at 8:30. And that's not rolling into it yawning and stretching, fooling around putting on your warmups, getting ready to go into a meeting and listen to Chuck. That's 8:30 wide awake very alert talking business. I'll be doing this longer than I played football. You got to be an airhead not to tell the difference."

The Steelers are winning on TV and I keep sneaking looks, but White is restless. He's going into the house after wine, he's chasing down his little dog Dusty, he's hollering over to the next-door neighbor, he's showing me his vegetable garden, he's talking to his pregnant wife, Karen, who is executive director of the local chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation. He's saying, "I want them to win, but I don't care about the details. I hear the announcers saying things about the guys, and they don't know what they're talking

about, and I start yelling. . . . I'm not a fan. I was into doing it." There is the memory of White on the sidelines, chortling, sweating, pacing, fidgeting, groaning, going on and coming off; he didn't watch the game then either. For the Steeler exhibition games this year he was the local telecast's sideline reporter, but being around the bench in street clothes made him feel strange.

"It'll mess up your head. You have to sever . . . have to get away from it."

It's only later as we're riding in his Mercedes that he can quite bring himself to say it: "I'm not a football player anymore. It can make you toss and turn, thinking about that. But you accept it, get past it, a little period of—yeah, you can call it withdrawal. I'm not going to be a player anymore."

And isn't it a comedown? "I get off on what I'm doing. I can get off on anything I make some money behind."

Although he eventually made substantially more than \$100,000 a year playing football, he says he didn't do that for the money. "I didn't play for the Steelers. I played for Dwight. People take that the wrong way. But if a player's not playing for himself.... All the money in the world is not going to make me stick my head in there when I know it's going to get cut off. You got to want to do it."

And Dwight did. Later, extremely later, at night, we are in an after-hours spot in Pittsburgh's black Hill district, and Dwight is talking about how he felt when in college it suddenly came to him that he wanted to play pro ball. "I was sitting in this place with some guys and they were talking, and I wasn't even there with them. I was somewhere else. I was thinking about making it in the pros. And I squeezed the drink so hard the glass broke."

Now he wants to make it as one of the few black stockbrokers in Pittsburgh, dealing mostly with the white upper-middle class. "You can't hardly be an investor if you got to rake and scrape to eat every day. The kind of business I do, not many black incomes are high enough to participate. Does that bother me? No. Because the fact I'm in it is one step closer to get more blacks into a sophisticated type of investing. I'm infiltrating. We got to quit hollering about the 40 acres and a mule we ain't going to get. It's a capitalistic society we live in. I'd like to help you, but I can't help you if you're going to sleep on the ground.'

Let it be said that White was not received as any kind of Oreo in those late-night ethnic places we went to, where whatever business might have been going on was not SEC-regulated. He is received with familiarity and extreme respect. "I like it," he says smiling, "that I can be on the top of the Steel Building during the day and down here swinging it with Leroy occasionally during the night."

Pittsburgh's Republican bigwigs no doubt had that in mind when they tried to talk White into running for sheriff recently. "That legitimatized the hell out of Dwight," says Dwight. "A lot of people of other persuasions-that made them say, well, he must be pretty legit. And I am legit. Allegheny County is heavily Democratic, but I'd get the black vote, which is a lot of Democrats. And I'd get the Jewish Republican vote. Plus I'd pick up a few stragglers. But I was just getting started at Bache, and I didn't know that much about Allegheny County politics, and ... I didn't want to be sheriff."

The first time White took the SEC accreditation test, he failed it. I remember hearing him talk with Joe Gilliam back in '73 about his days in college English: "I coulda been a Hemingway, a Edgar Poe. I laid a verbal avalanche on that woman. A theme this long!" He stretched his hands as in telling a fish story, only vertically. "But I'd have all these comma splices. She'd give me a B-plus or a A for expression, slash, a F-minus for grammar. Point out a sentence fragment. That's what I wanted! Leave 'em hangin'! Lookin' for more!"

"Did you ever pass?" asked Gilliam.
"No," said White. "I never did."
They slapped hands.

"Puts and calls, strips and straddles," he said at lunch high atop the U.S. Steel Building, where Bache's offices are. "Stuff will give you the blues. Thirty books. That's a hell of a lot of reading. In three months. And I been beaten in the head 10 years, I got some rattles. Really."

But he passed the test on the second try. Now he's on salary, learning the ropes. After his first year he'll have to make it on commission, which won't be easy. "You don't generate business by losing money for people. Damn what the reason is."

But White spent 10 years playing with a group that was "tough as a keg of nails" and didn't worry about reasons. "That defensive line we had. I felt a security about that. We reached a point where the game was really fun because we could whip everybody on the block. It wasn't even hard. Jack Tatum said in his book, you go out on the field and see those four dudes and

think, boy oh boy, what's going to happen today.

"We knew what. We were very predictable. It's like the old thing about cotton and corn. It's going to be around. And us. You could go on the field and people would not bother you. Say to 'em, 'Fella, I am going to knock you out. And I don't need any help. But if I do, there's some fellas back there to clean up what's left.' Back there was Glen Edwards, John Rowser, J. T. Thomas, Jack Lambert, Jack Ham, Mel Blount, Mike Wagner, Andy Russell, they were all individually great. But us four-to be the best, most thorough group at that time made you feel good. We were so dominant they changed the rules. Took away the headslap, wouldn't let Joe Greene crowd the ball. They couldn't beat us on the field so they tried to beat us with the rules. And cut down on the bump and run because J. T. and Mel can bump and run God."

White wasn't happy as a Steeler last year. He was hurt and had slowed down, and people were saying he was being kept on the team because you couldn't cut a guy who got out of a hospital bed to help you win your first Super Bowl. He wasn't starting and he thought he wasn't getting a chance.

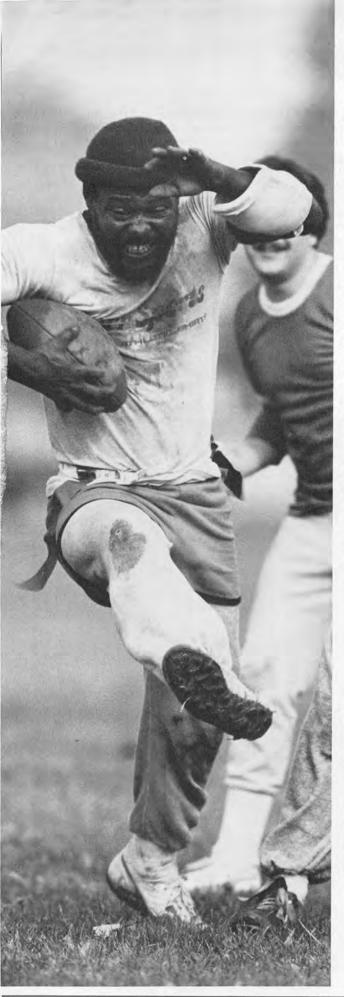
In the Steelers' last home game, Rocky Bleier, who had said he was retiring, scored a touchdown and got an ovation. After the game, White typically came up with the apt observation: "Like we used to say back home when somebody had a good funeral, 'They put him away real nice.'" It was White's last home game, too.

"When I came to the team, all the ingredients were right for Pittsburgh to win. Last year, all the ingredients were there for Dwight to get the hell out. There wasn't nearly as much hoopteraw about me as Rocky, but I hadn't announced my retirement ahead of time.

"I played on one of the best teams, in a great town. No point in me leaving on a negative note. I've still got the scars in my lungs. When the weather cools off, I can feel them grab. But for 10 years I got beat on the head, and rained on, and snowed on, rolled on, and finally dumped on. And now . . . I feel good about Dwight."

ROY BLOUNT'S last piece in INSIDE SPORTS was on Minnesota Twins' flake Mickey Hatcher. On the following pages, freelancer ED KIERSH reports on 10 former Super Bowl participants. KIERSH's first book, about retired baseball players, will be published this year by Bantam.





FRENCHY FUQUA

By Edward Kiersh

ohn "Frenchy" Fuqua, aka "The Count," or "The Mad Frenchman"; halfback for the New York Giants 1969 and Pittsburgh 1970–76; 1976 Super Bowl statistics were overshadowed by his Pancho Villa and Caveman outfits, and six-inch-heel Moon Shoes; currently a circulation supervisor at *The Detroit News* who oversees the routes of 13,000

newspaper carriers:

"I've really settled down. If I want to drink a few bottles of Jack Daniel's, I'll do it at home, not in public. I can't let my boys know about it. I've got to maintain a certain image. The News created this position for me and, while I didn't make a full adjustment to it until 18 months ago, I want to show respect. Believe it or not, I'm always wearing a suit and tie. Except, that is, when I'm partying. And that's a lot.

"The best thing about the newspaper business is the competition. The *Detroit Free Press* is down the block, and when I can steal one of their crews, it's a feather in my hat. This job is constant pressure. But I learned how to communicate with people when I was on the banquet circuit. My greatest asset now is knowing how to motivate. I've set up the best newspaper-carrier recruitment program in the country.

"I'm looking forward to January. The Super Bowl is in my city this year. It's blowing my mind to think what a scene it'll be. I even think I'm going to pull out my Count suit or goldfish shoes. You remember, the ones with the fiberglass heels and the live fish floating around. I haven't worn any of this stuff in years, but I owe

it to my public to put on a show.

"I can still outdress the whole NFL. I'm still a monster. Lem Barney, L. C. Greenwood, Jim 'The Last Great White Hope' Clack, all kinds of guys tried to dress off with me. They couldn't. I

was too devastating. Remember,

I swam the ocean and didn't get wet,
A mountain fell on me and I ain't dead yet,
Horses and elephants trampled my hide,
A cobra bit me, and crawled off and died,
I mixed with Cubans, Frenchmen and Dutch,
A little bit of brother, but not too much,
I hitchhiked lightning and rode with thunder,
Make people wonder. Whoa! Whoa!"



UP

MITCH HOOPES

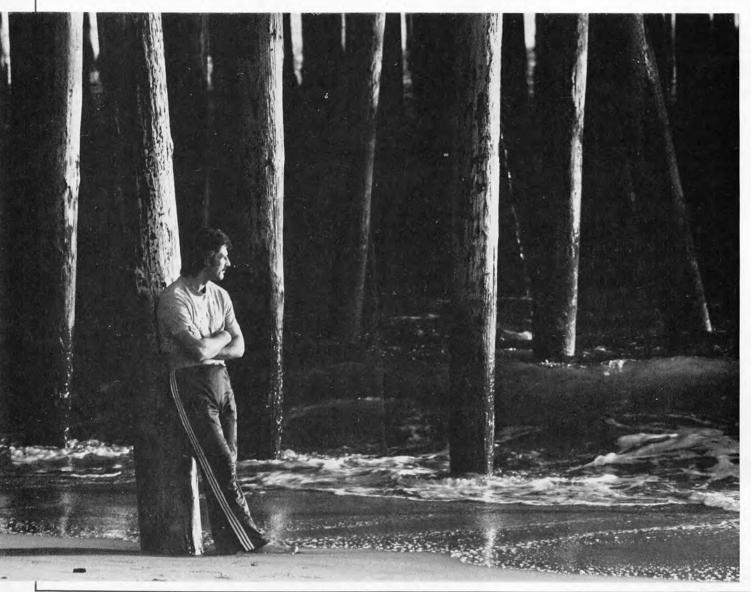


itch Hoopes, kicker for Dallas 1975, San Diego and Houston 1976, Detroit 1977, Philadelphia 1978; in a crucial Super Bowl X play, Pittsburgh blocked his punt and turned it into a fourth-quarter safety against Dallas; currently sells photocopiers, once worked in a Thom McAn shoe store:

"My big thing these days is playing basketball. I'm always dreaming of hitting a basket for the Phoenix Suns with one second on the clock. I guess I haven't made a true transition yet. I'm still trying to find myself.

"When you leave football, you come into the real world. Maybe I'd still be in football if I had acted differently with Dallas. I had long hair and a beard, and the rap on me was that I was a bad boy. I should have stroked management, played the straight role. I really didn't take advantage of the monetary opportunities, investments, things like that.

"Things will work out. But there are scars, psychologically. All ballplayers feel the pain after they're cut or have to retire. It's like becoming a millionaire and losing it on the stock exchange the next day."





MERCURY MORRIS

ugene "Mercury" Morris, halfback for Miami 1969–75, San Diego 1976; appeared in three Super Bowls, starting in the 1974 game; currently recuperating from a neck operation and selling decorative prints of animals:

"After 1976 I took a terrible nosedive. I totaled my car into a garbage truck, and I started to get these terrible headaches, or seizures, four, five hours a day. I found out I had a degenerative disease in my neck that should have been spotted years earlier. My right side started to waste away, and I had seizures where I completely lost control of my movements. Cortisone injections at the base of my skull didn't work, and I got to the point of suicide. I finally met a doctor who knew what he was doing, but my neck movements are still only 70 per cent of what they used to be.

"All this came about because I played with a broken neck in 1973. A team doctor told me then I didn't need a brace. [The Dolphins deny that Morris played with a broken neck.] I told them something was wrong, but they always considered me an 'attitude problem.' They always told other players to stay away from me. When Don Reese and Randy Crowder got busted for selling coke, Miami wanted it to be me. They knew just because I was a star I attracted lots of strange people, hustlers, Mafia guys, dope dealers, gamblers, and they hoped I'd hang myself one day.

"Now I'm thinking of giving self-help talks to other players. In football, you lead a battered, jockstrap type of life. It's not really your life, it's just what you do for a living for a short time. With this locker-room attitude, it's hard to come to terms with the 9-to-5 world. Football just isn't that important. That's why I let my kids play with my game balls.

"I was a man first and then a Dolphin. Football is so pretentious, the public is not supposed to know about the harassment, the politics. I used to feel like Dred Scott, with people arbitrating over my life and doing what they wanted with blacks. But I'm not bitter anymore. It's like I set a match to all those football memories."



ED MARINARO

d Marinaro, running back for Minnesota 1972–75, the New York Jets 1976, Seattle 1977; rushed for three yards in the 1974 Super Bowl, also caught two passes for 39 yards; currently a regular on TV's *Hill Street Blues*, played "Sonny" on the *Laverne and Shirley* show last year:

"Life is certainly a lot easier when you're playing football. Yet I never liked the actual games. No way did I want to mess up my beautiful body. The rewards were great, but it wasn't a great experience. Now, though, I can see that the game gave me a feeling of self-esteem. This has to help me in acting, since your ego is out there all the time. I see myself as a leading man. One day I'm going to do the same things as De Niro or Pacino.

"As an athlete, you can't show your emotions or your vulnerability. Players never express their fears to each other. Now I can talk to friends and work these things out. It's like crying."





DUANE THOMAS

uane Thomas, the halfback described by Who's Who in Football as "the most puzzling personality in the game," played for Dallas 1970–71, Washington 1973–74, failed in a 1979 comeback bid with Green Bay; ran for 95 yards as a Cowboy in Super Bowl VI; currently owns an import-export business, once sold raincoats and other menswear for a Dallas-based subsidiary of London Fog:

"Everyone on the team thought I was plain weird. It was baffling to them that I ignored the press. They couldn't understand that I wasn't being paid enough to give any team 12 months of my time.

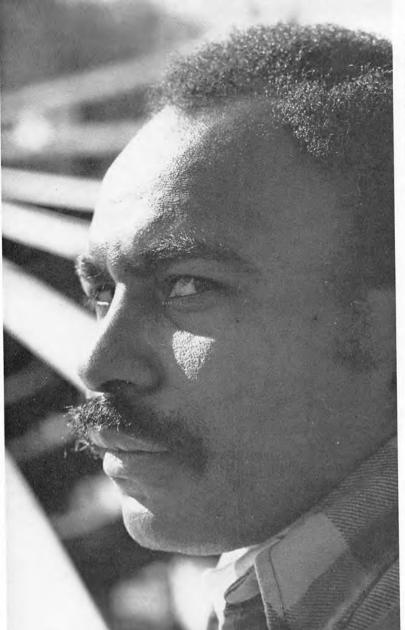
"I never wanted to offend Dallas. It's a special organization. But there was a double standard. Being black was a real problem. They think blacks from small towns or small colleges are ignorant, inferior.

"I didn't make the Cowboys in 1976. My friends encouraged me to try football again a few years later. When Green Bay didn't go along with my program, I made a few movies. Eventually, I went bankrupt. The movie business is a lot like football. There's constant pressure, and you always have to deal with an offseason, or insecurity."



WIDE WORLD







PI

WILLIE LANIER

pass and forced Minnesota quarterback Joe Kapp to hurry numerous others in Super Bowl IV; currently a stockbroker in Virginia.

"For two years after I retired, I was in a period of deep confusion. It was impossible for me to make decisions. Each year at the end of the season, you're left with a void. The first few weeks are always a downer. But at least you know you'll be playing again. When you retire, you're left with nothing.

"The main problem was that nothing appeared as challenging as football. Perhaps the transition is easier if you play the game less intensely, or don't go all out to win. But what else in life offers the same psychological involvement as athletics? You think, 'What's the point of going on?'

"Once I had had enough of letting the world pass me by, I got into stocks. I especially like dealing with tax shelters. It's challenging to assist people in their financial decisions. You have to know people better than the market. The real trick is making them feel comfortable, especially in these rough times."



EDDIE HINTON

ddie Hinton, wide receiver for Baltimore 1969–72, Houston 1973, New England 1974; caught two passes for 51 yards in Super Bowl V against Dallas; currently the owner of Fly-Clean, an airplane cleaning service:

"Once you're in a Super Bowl, there's no big high anymore. It's impossible to follow up. My greatest weakness after I left the game was my public speaking. I took a toastmaster seminar and then drifted between the insurance business and selling corrugated boxes. I wasn't really happy, but as a player you learn to regroup.

"One day I was with a friend who has some car washes, and I heard this loud plane flying overhead. I thought, I could design a mobile unit to wash planes. You just need a one-ton pickup truck, the expertise to supervise people, and you can wash a plane anywhere.

"I want to see my name up in lights again. I used to be so scared about the plane-cleaning business, always wondering if I made the right move. Now I'm only scared about my Super Bowl ring. Sometimes I forget to take it off when I'm working."







WILLIE DAVIS

illie Davis, defensive end/offensive tackle for Cleveland 1958–59, Green Bay 1960–69; helped the Packers limit Kansas City and Oakland to 10 and 14 points, respectively, in Super Bowls I and II; currently the owner of a beer-distributing company, five radio stations and a school-supply firm, and the director of a California bank:

"Even while I was playing, my heart was set on business. My high school coach told me that blacks didn't make it in the business world, and that infuriated me. I saw my mother scrimping and scraping along, working as a cook in a country club. I had to prove him wrong.

"I didn't want anyone doing a favor for an ex-jock. As a player, you heard some real horror stories about the transition. But Vince [Lombardi]—did I love him—told me to go after anything I wanted, not to be afraid. He taught his players to give up a piece of themselves, and that driving force, or mental toughness, is still with me today.

"Believing in myself, that's Lombardi's legacy. In business you're down on your knees all the time. But the Packer tradition is overcoming, pulling games out in the last few minutes. I'm living up to something Vince would want me to achieve."



JOHN BEASLEY

ohn Beasley, aka "The Beaser," or "John of Arabia"; tight end for Minnesota 1967–73, New Orleans 1973–74; made two receptions for 41 yards in Super Bowl IV against Kansas City in 1970; currently manages a gold mine in Idaho, helps operate a uranium mine in Utah, and is an energy consultant to varied international corporations:

"My head whirled, I was shocked when I found out I could make unbelievable money without playing that crazy game. I was always as fast as a glacier. I couldn't baffle them with my body or brains. I had to rely on bullcrap. That didn't work after awhile on the field, so I had to come up with something else. Gulf Consolidated Services, a company specializing in selling steel and other drilling materials to the Arabs, needed someone for its London division. I did some fast talking for that position. I've always been able to get people to like me. And boy, did that job result in some wild experiences.

"I didn't have to eat monkey brains in Indonesia, but I was surrounded by machine guns in Algeria, and at a palace dinner in Saudi Arabia, when some prince said, 'Mr. John, this is for you,' I almost croaked. I had to act the honored guest and swallow a goat's eye. I just gulped. I didn't taste a thing

"In the age of mega-projects, where every transaction means a billion bucks, you really get to know what pressure means. Football was nothing compared to this. I've just started my own company, Trans-Atlantic Pacific, and I've already set up a presence in Kuwait, Caracas and throughout Europe. But the Red Chinese don't give a damn about what you did in the Super Bowl.

"At 36, I'm on my way. I went dead-ass broke with a tungsten mine back in 1975, and I narrowly missed being killed when the Red Brigade got Aldo Moro. But now I have this place in Laguna and flats in London and Switzerland. You should see my girlfriend's [a former Miss Utah] mountain in Utah. It's filled with \$20 million worth of uranium."



IIPI

JIM OTTO

im Otto, aka "Double Zero"; center of Oakland 1960–1974, played in 210 consecutive regular-season games and 9 straight AFL All-Star games; played in Super Bowl II; currently owns a Burger King franchise, once owned a walnut ranch, drives a car with the license plate "I AM 00"; once had a swimming pool with a mosaic Raider logo embedded in the floor; sends out Christmas cards of himself in a Raider jersey, flanked by family members dressed as cheerleaders:

"The Raiders are the elite. They're like well-trained commandos. We like to see ourselves as perfection, precision, sharp in mind and body. If the Raiders had been sent to Iran to get the hostages out, we would've come

through the skylights with our machine guns blazing.

"Maybe I should've quit a little earlier. My left knee is all mush, and I can barely walk or wash a car. I played with pain a long time, and maybe if I didn't, I'd be able to live a normal life now. I'd like to do more hunting in Alaska, or be with my 15-year-old son. But football was the only thing I ever wanted to do. The game is my life.

"I knew I was going to have to quit. I felt pretty low. There's a lot of solitude attached to farming, and you have a lot of time to think. You remember the old days, the Raiders who didn't even get to play in a Super Bowl, and then it doesn't matter that I was never on a winning team.

"The new Raiders come up here for hunting and think I've got it made. But darn, it would be pretty good to be able to play. You know, there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about the game. There's always football. I'm never going to get away from it, no matter what I do. I don't care if I don't. I love it."





The 1981 Kodak All-America Football Team.



Terry Crouch OL Oklahoma



Kurt Becker OL Michigan





Fred Marion DB Miami (Florida)





Anthony Carter WR Michigan



Darrin Nelson Fl



Jim McMahon QB



Glen Collins DL Mississippi State



Sean Farrell OL



Billy Ray Smith DL



Roy Foster OL



Tommy Wilcox DB Alabama



Sal Sunseri LB



Dan Marino QB



Kenneth Sims DI



Jimmy Williams DI



Harvey Armstrong DL SMU



Tim Wrightman TE UCLA





Bob Crable LB



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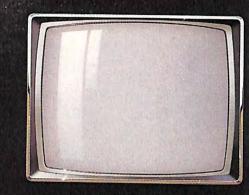
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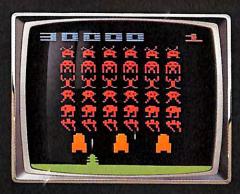
us to set standards of excellence for our own achievements.

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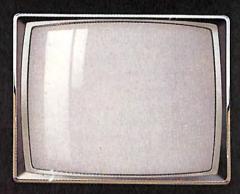
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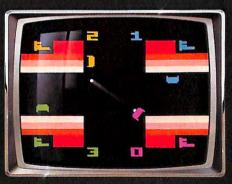
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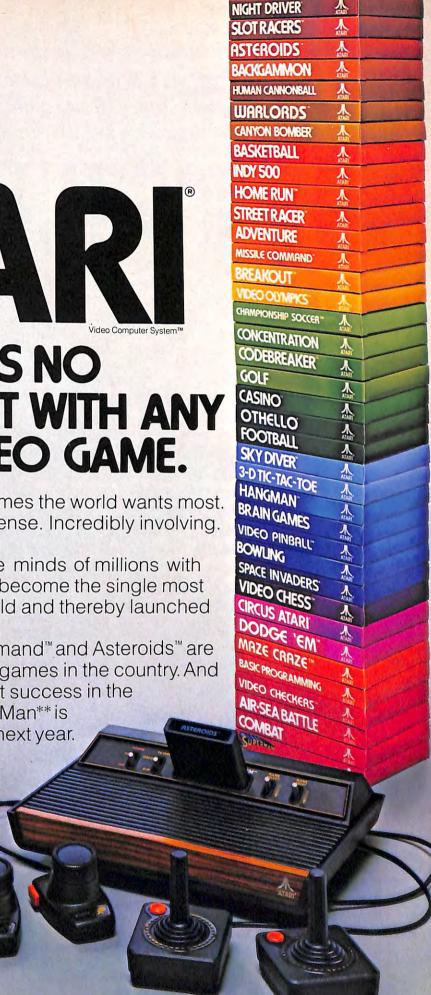
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judging by its current success in the arcades, ATARI Pac Man** is slated for the same next year.

ATARI

OA Warner Communications Compan



The ups and downs of major league managers: The bad news is that you're almost certain to get fired. The good news is that you're almost certain to be hired by another team.

FIRING LINES

By Vic Ziegel

HE BASEBALL GAME BEGINS in an hour and the manager is in his office, filling out a line-up card that's making him sick. He can get somebody else to tape it to the dugout wall and hand it to the umpire. But after that, big trouble. He actually has to watch them play.

The manager would rather spend the evening in the office, where the little refrigerator is filled with the sponsor's beer. Or head back to the hotel, where he has a suite, with another refrigerator. He could leave town, but he'd have to pay for that himself. All he has to do is make it through this game and he has a first-class airplane ticket to the next city, the next refrigerator. If he went home, he'd be taking out the garbage. He might as well start for the dugout; nobody ever got fired during the national anthem.

If there's one thing the manager knows is going to happen—tomorrow, next month, in the winter when he's waiting to tee off and somebody comes running over and says there's a phone call for him-it's that he'll be fired. He's going to open that refrigerator one day and the light won't come on. The next time anybody sees him he'll be paying his way to the World Series. And the damn sportswriters are going to be asking if he wants to manage again. "If the right opportunity comes along," that's what you're supposed to tell them. What's the right opportunity? Atlanta, even if he has to mop the owner's deck. San Francisco, who cares what the fans do away from the ballpark? Anywhere's the right opportunity. Anywhere with a refrigerator.

Eleven major league teams played manager bye-bye this year. Twelve, if you include San Diego. Seemed like every time you picked up a newspaper there was another manager fired because, it was reliably reported, a change was necessary.

The truth is, 1981 wasn't an unusually busy year for managerial layoffs. The year before, 13 managers became necessary changes. The year before that, another 13. For the last seven seasons, the annual average for managers coming and going is 12.

The average number for the seven years prior to that, 1968–74, drops to eight. And the number stays remarkably constant for the seven years that ended in 1967, an average of 8.3. There are more teams now, sure. But when those eights were being rolled, there were 20 or 24 clubs, a percentage of 40 or 33 per cent. Now, with 26 clubs, spread over two countries, the figure is up to 46 per cent.

John Q. Manager might think this an unhealthy trend. Downright un-American. Ought to write a letter to his senator. Unfortunately, the Senate, once a cozy veteran clubhouse, is having its own employment problems. Not too many elections ago, 1960, 96 per cent of senators seeking reelection were dutifully reelected. Ten years later the percentage dropped to 78. And 1980, the last time anybody pulled a senator's lever, only 47 per cent were reelected. On top of that, since 1892 this country never denied the presidency to back-to-back incumbents until Ford and Carter.

So the voters are trying to cure a slump by shaking up the batting order. Fair enough. But baseball is a study in patience, the summer game, nine innings without a clock. Why this rush to give Gene Mauch another chance?





Illustration by Hovik Dilakian

Why are managers being discarded like exhausted porno stars? The most popular explanations have everything to do with money. You remember money. Owners give it, players get it, fans use it to buy tickets, and television stations and cable systems throw it at owners.

And no matter how much the owners spend, they still have a quarter left to buy a newspaper. According to one former manager, that's where the

trouble begins.

"The firings aren't created by upper-echelon management," insists Jim Fregosi, who brought the California Angels their one division championship, their only piece of success in 21 years for the singing cowboy. Fregosi, fired in midseason, believes, "The press dictates whether or not you keep your job. The newspapers say, 'This owner went out and signed five free agents and spent this much money and all of a sudden they're not winning with this manager.' If they say it in the papers every day-'What about Jim Fregosi?'—the owners are going to read it every day. It puts an idea in their heads. Whether it's right or wrong, it puts an idea in their heads."

A second theory is that owners have no heads. "A lot of owners know nothing about baseball," says Paul Richards, who managed in the majors for 12 years and was a general manager with three clubs. At 73, he's the knowit-all right hand for Texas Ranger general manager Eddie Robinson. Richards says that most owners "make

changes for publicity. They are ignorant of the manager's problems; not conversant enough with baseball to know if their manager is doing a good job or not. For that same reason, a poor manager can get by."

This mess of a baseball season, with teams getting two chances to finish first, was hardly a godsend for managers. Montreal and Kansas City officials decided that staying close wasn't enough, that a change of managers might help their teams reach the playoffs. So they changed and reached the playoffs. Then crashed.

If winning isn't good enough, how can the manager of the '80s survive?

Well, he won't. The body count will only increase. But medical help is on the way.

Take a look at the managers who have had long-term success—winning, or holding their jobs, or being snapped up by other clubs. "The Earl Weavers, the Ralph Houks, the Sparky Andersons," says Eric Margenau, a New York psychoanalyst. "Whatever their differences in style, the main component in all of them seems to be an inner kind of security. As human beings, not even as managers."

A lack of security, on the other hand, is one strong reason why managers bury themselves. Margenau offers as an example Gene Michael, who was dismissed by George Steinbrenner not long after telling the Yankee boss to stop threatening to fire him. "Everything was going fine for Michael as long as he was able to abdicate that

assertive role," Margenau points out. "But as soon as he had to say, 'George, get the hell off my back,' he got himself into trouble. He allowed his own anxieties, his own personal insecurities, to countermand his intellectual function. If he looked at it rationally he would have known that Steinbrenner is not the kind of person you can say those things to."

Let's try and figure out why managers are always to blame and why the poor saps keep coming back for more.

"I love managing," says Whitey Herzog, who was fired by Texas and Kansas City. "Everybody who ever played thinks he can be the greatest manager in the world. You're in the limelight. And when the season ends, you're done. You don't have to do anything until January but make a few speeches. And if you're not successful you don't even have to do that."

When he was making out his earliest lineup cards, Herzog remembers, "You could have a meeting, call your 25 players dumb bastards and cuss them out. You try that now and they'll crawl in a hole. Or a player will go to the general manager and say, 'I don't want to play for this guy, trade me.' Hell, the general manager will just get rid of the manager."

Not at St. Louis, where Herzog is the GM as well as manager, swapping players with gusto—14 bodies coming and 21 going. In Oakland, Billy Martin also wears two hats. Could a trend be breaking out? It's certainly an arrangement that makes Herzog and

MILESTONES AND MISHAPS

Most Different Teams Managed—JIMMY DYKES (6): Actually changed jobs less than Bucky Harris (8 clubs, counting three stints with Senators and two with Tigers). Don't count out Al Dark, Billy Martin or Dick Williams with 5.

Smartest Managerial Decision—EDDIE SAWYER: Philadelphia lost first game of 1960 season and Sawyer quit. Phils went on to lose 94 more and finish last. Sawyer said at the time: "I'm 49 and I want to live to be 50."

Most Comebacks With Same Team (3)—DANNY MURTAUGH: Pirate skipper made Bob Lemon look stable. Murtaugh's stints were 1957-64, 1967, 1970-71 and 1975-76.

Most Seasons—Connie Mack (53): Helped that he owned the Philadelphia A's most of those years. At 88, he was also oldest manager.

Worst Yachtsman-Turned-Manager—TED TURNER: Atlanta owner took over reins from Dave Bristol for one game, which Braves lost. Commissioner ordered Turner to relinquish his role the next day.

Most World Series With Different Teams—BILL McKechnie (3): Pittsburgh (1925), St. Louis (1928), Cincinnati (1939–40). Boston Braves were only team to hire him and not get into a Series.

Most Valuable Manager—CHUCK TANNER: Oakland owner Charlie Finley traded Tanner to Pirates for catcher Manny Sanguillen and \$100,000. New A's pilot Jack McKeon said: "I hope I do a good enough job that Charlie can trade me for \$200,000 and a couple of ballplayers."

Most Victories One Season—Frank Chance (116): Cubs lost only 36 games in 1906, but lost four more in six-game World Series. —Greg Kelly Martin feel comfortable. And one that always worked for Paul Winchell and Jerry Mahoney. The only other arrangement that makes sense is what Dick Williams went for at San Diego: three guaranteed years at \$150,000 each and a swell climate.

History tells us you can't fire the team but it's a snap to remove the manager. (In extreme cases, they have even fired the fans—see Washington Senators 1971, Boston Braves 1953, etc.) These days, with free agency, long-term contracts, guaranteed money, hairdryers, no-trade contract clauses, partial no-trades, "it's more difficult for the manager to do his job," says Harry Dalton, Brewer GM.

Dalton, who plays the free-agency game, sees no-trade agreements becoming "more prevalent. The fellows who go through free agency negotiate with the big hammer and they put all those things on the table." It's Dalton's guess that a third of the players on each team can turn to the manager and say, "I don't know where you'll be next year, Skip, but I know I'll be right here."

Bill Veeck was no different from other, stodgier owners. "Most managers weren't fired because of inefficiency," says the former owner of three major league teams, "but because the owners were playing games. It was easier to camouflage bad players by changing managers. It's like a magician's sleight of hand; you divert attention from the real problem. The other owners knew the manager was treated badly and that's why they were willing to give him another job. I guess it's a case of 'Better the villain you know, than the villain you don't know.' This might explain the peregrinations of Bob Lemon. I told Bob, when he managed for me, 'If the team had played as well as you managed, I wouldn't have to replace you."

Veeck calls the new crop of owners, "corporations. You can't expect corporations to know as much about baseball as the old owners. All they know are the complaints of the fellows who ride the train with them in the morning."

A man in management's corner derides the heavy thinking. "It's all show biz," he said, once he was assured his name wouldn't appear in the credits. "How many moves can you make in a baseball game? Look at Jim Fanning. If he can be a winner, after never managing in the majors, not managing anywhere for 20 years, my God, doesn't that tell you something? For the owners, it's anything that will sell

tickets. They want a guy who can talk to the press, an image guy. Think Yogi could manage these days? Forget it. And for all anybody knows he was a great manager."

Bobby Cox was fired in Atlanta and put to work in Toronto. Joe Torre, unloaded by the Mets after losing more games than any other Met manager, was rushed in to replace Cox. Old headaches for new. Of the two, Torre seems better off. The money is impressive, \$450,000 for three years, and he doesn't have to keep bumping into Dave Kingman.

The managers of another generation hoped to keep troublesome players in line by fining them. Remember the Giant who was ordered to bunt and, instead, hit a home run? John McGraw took away \$25 from that disobedient hero. It's also worth remembering that McGraw managed the same team for 31 years. The fine is no longer dandy. With an average player's salary of close to \$200,000, the fine is almost ridiculous. But suppose a player is fined. He can appeal to a grievance committee. John McGraw did not have to worry about grievance committees.

The player has changed, we hear a lot of that. Mostly, we hear it from the managers. Do you think it's all that light beer the players are drinking? Maybe it's the conversation. Certainly, newspaper sports sections have changed. Reporters are starting to get away with words like "ass." And SOB. And then there's that incessant bleepbleep-bleep. Players were talking that way before the infield-fly rule. But for their ears only. Now the players are badgered for quotes before a game, after a game, half dressed and less. By people with tape recorders, by people with microphones, by people who are women. At times, the players are embarrassed by their quotes. Pressure, everybody feels it. That pressure sometimes breaks out into the open-Garry Templeton flashing his fingers in St. Louis, Cesar Cedeno battling in the stands, Reggie Jackson and Billy Martin going at it in the dugout. We have managers starting to show unusual strain-Eddie Stanky walking off the job in Texas after one day, Maury Wills taking off in the sixth inning of an exhibition game, Billy Martin vs. anybody. The manager finds himself aching for that postgame beer around the third inning.

"It may sound a little simplistic," psychoanalyst Margenau says, "but the manager, in a lot of respects, is like the head of a family. He's put in a

position where he has to deal with kids whose personality variables he can't account for. He's sort of stuck with how they turn out. Some are going to be well behaved and some are going to say, 'Screw you, I'm not doing it that way.' Especially now, with the new contracts, when you have players who are not dependent on him. Just as in the modern family, where kids are less and less dependent on that father image for the control.

"So you see, managers who are most successful—not necessarily in terms of their baseball skills—are managers like the two in the World Series."

Lemon and Tom Lasorda, in Margenau's description, have strong egos, "not in a dominating sense, but secure. Lemon doesn't have to demand respect or allegiance. He feels secure that he has it. He's comfortable in his role as father and he can let the kids—the Jacksons, the Nettleses, the Gossages—get the accolades."

Lasorda, the loud one, the cheerleader, isn't different from the easygoing Lemon, Margenau says. "You might think Lasorda competes with his players, because he's always the center of attention in a way that Lemon isn't. But it's not in a competitive way. He's ebullient. There's a thing that he projects that says, 'This is who I am, this is what I'm doing, and even if I make a bit of a fool of myself, it's all right because I'm having a good time.' As a personality, or a baseball strategist, he doesn't have to dominate his players. He creates a feeling of permissiveness and relaxation. That he's behind them, on their side."

When the Phillies were sold for 30 million big ones, the owners went for a few more dollars for a manager. Let's face it, they had no other choice. The Cubs once tried to do without a manager by revolving their coaches. The experiment was a failure. But since it was the Cubs, how do we really know?

Casey Stengel, a bum in the 1930s who became a genius in the '50s, was once asked why the Mets' first draft choice in 1962 was a nondescript catcher. "You have to draft a catcher," Casey said, "because if you don't have one, the pitch will roll all the way back to the screen."

It's for much the same reason that managers will always be needed. After a losing game, when the press streams into the manager's office looking for explanations, they can hardly direct their questions to the refrigerator.

VIC ZIEGEL is a contributing editor for New York magazine.

CHECKING OUT THE FORWARDS

The best and the worst of the men who man the wings and anchor the lines in the NHL

BY STAN FISCHLER

HEY SKATE FASTER THAN ever. They are larger and mightier than their predecessors. When they fire the six-ounce hunk of vulcanized rubber, the puck resembles buckshot hellbent for a pheasant. "Watching Reg Leach wind up," says Hartford Whaler goalie Greg Millen, "is like looking down the barrel of a loaded gun."

Eleven clubs set team season-scoring records last year when an average of 7.7 goals per game were scored, the highest in 37 years. Through two months of this season, the average climbed to 8.02.

Compared to the lasers released by the shooters of the 1980s, the shots fired by Hall of Famers Maurice Richard and Gordie Howe 25 years ago look more like medicine balls tossed around a gym. Never before has the repertoire of NHL shooters been more diverse or devastating. Unlike Richard and Howe, who employed a flat stick blade, the contemporary shooter carries a weapon that is better balanced

and lighter. With a half-inch curve on his stick, Kent Nilsson of Calgary can whip a shot more than 100 miles an hour that betrays all symptoms of a knuckleball.

Payment for goals has climbed in proportion to the speed of the shots. When Howe led the NHL in scoring 30 years ago, he was tickled with his \$10,000-a-year contract. Marcel Dionne, who did not lead the league in scoring last year, earns \$600,000 annually, give or take a few gold bars.

Judging by the way he is dominating the NHL at age 20, Wayne Gretzky soon may make any discussion of shooters academic. The G-Man already is the league's most potent scorer. "I hate to think how good Gretzky's going to be when he grows up," says Howe.

Devising ways of stopping Gretzky has become an obsession with coaches. "You've got to meet him in the parking lot before the game," says Ranger coach Herb Brooks, "escort him to and from the bench and stay with him all night until your guy hands him the soap in the Oilers' dressing room." Gretzky's genius notwithstanding, his is not the only puck on the ice. Pre-

senting the big shots of hockey:

MOST ACCURATE SHOT:

Mike Bossy, New York Islanders. Once a first-team All-Star right wing: twice a second-team All-Star; once a Calder Trophy winner. Last season: 68 goals and 51 assists for 119 points. Lifetime: 241 goals and 187 assists for 428 points in 307 games (before this season). "Mike's asset," says Quebec goalie Dan Bouchard, "is that he never waits. And he hits the net with 95 per cent of his shots." Bossy's 50-goals-in-50-games achievement last season was remarkable in both its concept (Bossy talked it up for weeks in advance) and its execution. He went into that 50th game, against Quebec, with 48 goals. For two periods Bossy was manacled. Finally, with 4:10 left, he beat goalie Ron Grahame with a backhander. With 1:29 left, the puck seemed to have eyes as Bossy's wrist shot from the left faceoff circle found an opening for his 50th goal. "I've faced them all," says Islander goalie Billy Smith, "and Mike's shot is the toughest to handle." Bossy cannot explain his radar secret. "When I shoot, I don't try to think of what I'm doing." Neither do the goalies.

MOST OVERPAID:

Marcel Dionne, Los Angeles Kings. Twice a first-team All-Star center, twice a second-team All-Star; twice a Lady Byng Trophy winner; once an Art Ross Trophy winner. Last season: 58 goals and 77 assists for 135 points. Lifetime: 438 goals and 625 assists for 1,063 points in 779 games. Dionne hasn't come close to filling the Inglewood Forum, nor has he converted the Kings into a Stanley Cup contender. Each spring he becomes The Invisible Man of the playoffs and consequently the Kings were eliminated in the first round the past four years. His contribution in the 1978, 1979 and 1980 playoffs was zero goals. His big splurge



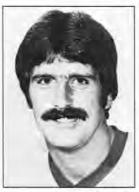
BOSSY



DIONNE



KERR



SIMMER



LINSEMAN

came last spring when he got one goal in four games as the Rangers upset the Kings. "You can bang him around," says Nick Fotiu, the Ranger enforcer, "and he won't do anything." Wealthy he is, Old Reliable he is not. A vintage Dionne vignette was his ineffectual effort in the 1981 Canada Cup tournament, followed by his petulant behavior when the NHL season began. Dionne adopted a self-imposed gag rule, refusing to speak to the media.

MOST UNDERRATED:

Reg Kerr, Chicago Black Hawks. Last season: 30 goals and 30 assists for 60 points. Lifetime: 55 goals and 66 assists for 121 points in 201 games. Based on his estimated salary of \$80,000 a year, the left wing/center cost the Black Hawks only \$2,666.67 per goal last season. That's a bargain compared to Dionne. Even his own bosses, GM Bob Pulford and coach Keith Magnuson, miscast this versatile skater. Magnuson started Kerr on a fourth line last season before Kerr worked his way to a regular shift while killing penalties and taking an odd turn on the power play. "He's hurt a lot of teams who underestimated his ability," says Winnipeg GM John Ferguson.

WORST SHOT FOR A HIGH SCORER:

Charlie Simmer, Los Angeles Kings. Twice a first-team All-Star left wing. Last season: 56 goals and 49 assists for 105 points in 65 games. Lifetime: 144 goals and 135 assists for 279 points in 250 games. "Charlie's shot couldn't crack a pane of glass," says coachturned-commentator Don Cherry. "But his shot does have eyes. He's like Nels Stewart was in the 1920s, who had no shot but led the league in scoring." Simmer works his way to the goal crease and shoots when he sees the whites of the goalie's eyes. How well he would perform without Dionne

and Dave Taylor on his line is a moot point that Simmer would rather not debate while the goals are coming.

WORST BACKSTABBER:

Ken Linseman, Philadelphia Flyers. Last season: 17 goals and 30 assists for 47 points in 51 games. Lifetime: 44 goals and 107 assists for 151 points in 161 games. No one was surprised that Linseman was involved when Ulf Nilsson was hospitalized during the 1981 Canada Cup. Nilsson claimed Linseman kicked or sticked him. A disciple of the Bobby Clarke school of slashing, the 23-year-old center uses an assortment of misdemeanors that mesh with Philadelphia's pugnacious pattern. "He likes to instigate," says Los Angeles captain Dave Lewis, "but he never finishes off what he's doing. He'll give a guy a stick in the back and then call a teammate over." Early this season, Montreal coach Bob Berry urged the NHL to take special disciplinary measures against "The Rat" after he had attempted to kick defenseman Robert Picard during a scuffle. Linseman eventually was fined \$200 for the incident, which the referee did not see but was later detected on the videotape of the game.

BEST NEVER TO AWAKEN:

Clark Gillies, New York Islanders. Twice a first-team All-Star left wing. Last season: 33 goals and 45 assists for 78 points. Lifetime: 214 goals and 257 assists for 471 points in 538 games. Like Ferdinand the Bull and The Reluctant Dragon, this behemoth is best left undisturbed. Boston's Terry O'Reilly and Al Secord will vouch for that. In the 1980 playoffs, O'Reilly went 0 for 3 in his swing-along with Gillies. After being TKOed, Secord decided to leave bad enough alone and skipped a rematch. Unfortunately for the Bruins, Gillies had been revived. He scored the game-winning goal in

the fifth game and with a career-high 16 points was instrumental in the Islanders winning their first Stanley Cup. "It's not wise," says Hartford goalie John Garrett, "to aggravate that man."

MOST HATED:

Tiger Williams, Vancouver Canucks. Last season: 35 goals and 27 assists for 62 points. Lifetime: 152 goals and 164 assists for 316 points in 507 games. He fights and, according to one victim, he also bites. "In a playoff game," retired penalty champ Dave Schultz recalls, "Williams bit me on the cheek, then pulled my hair and then head-butted me." Buffalo GM-coach Scotty Bowman doesn't like the left wing either. During the 1980 playoffs, Bowman says he was knocked unconscious after being swatted on the head by Tiger's stick. Despite Williams' denial, the NHL suspended him. The Tiger also can fight with his fists. "I hated to start in with him," says Schultz, "because he had a knack for crowding me and then coming back with short uppercuts."

MOST SMARTS:

Wayne Gretzky, Edmonton Oilers. Once a first-team All-Star center; once a second-team All-Star; twice a Hart Trophy winner; once a Lady Byng Trophy winner; once an Art Ross Trophy winner. Last season: 55 goals and 109 assists for 164 points. Lifetime: 106 goals and 195 assists for 301 points in 159 games. He has duped the best, from Guy Lafleur to Denis Potvin. "Coming up ice," says Vancouver coach Harry Neale, "Gretzky is thoroughly unpredictable. He is like the soccer player who kicks the ball into open space and suddenly a teammate is there. His anticipation is uncanny. He knows the area and is totally aware of where everyone is." "If he has one weakness," says Ranger defenseman Barry Beck, "it's that he can be



GILLIES



WILLIAMS



GRETZKY



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pushed off the puck easily—but you have to catch him first." And that's not easy.

WORST COMEDOWN FROM STARDOM:

Don Murdoch, Detroit Red Wings. Last season: 10 goals and nine assists for 19 points in 40 games. Lifetime: 112 goals and 104 assists for 216 points in 271 games. He scored five goals in a game in his first week as a Ranger rookie and finished with 32 goals in 59 games. But the Big Apple's nightlife took its toll and in August 1977 Murdoch was arrested for possession of cocaine. He labored through his sophomore season to jeers of "Junkie go home," was suspended for the first 40 games of his third season, and was shuffled off to Edmonton in 1980. He played so badly for the Oilers that he was sent to Wichita last season. The 25-year-old right wing is now getting probably his last chance in the NHL.

BEST IN THE CLUTCH:

Guy Lafleur, Montreal Canadiens. Six times a first-team All-Star right wing; three times an Art Ross Trophy winner; twice a Hart Trophy winner; once a Conn Smythe Trophy winner. Last season: 27 goals and 43 assists for 70 points in 51 games. Lifetime: 432 goals and 579 assists for 1,011 points in 728 games. Lafleur's best clutch play was moving left when his Cadillac was speared by a Montreal light pole last March. His best clutch goal was scored in the 1979 Canadiens-Bruins semifinal. The Habs trailed 4-3 with 1:14 left when Lafleur whipped the puck past goalie Gilles Gilbert, sending the game into overtime. Montreal won the game and went on to win its fourth Stanley Cup with Lafleur. "Guy," says Gretzky, who was his linemate during the Canada Cup, "is especially great at breaking for the holes." Although Lafleur's recent production has shown diminishing returns, he remains a near-unanimous choice as the player you'd like to have on the ice in the seventh game of the Stanley Cup final.

HONORABLE MENTION

Most Painful Shot: Mike Murphy, Los Angeles Kings. Last season one of Murphy's shots hit St. Louis goalie Mike Liut in his most delicate spot. Liut's protective cup disintegrated on impact. The goaltender's groin injury was so severe, surgery was required to prevent hemorrhaging. Worst Snowthrower: Kent Nilsson, Calgary

Flames. Nilsson openly avoids body contact. "I watched Kent for a full season," says broadcaster Jiggs Mc-Donald, "and I can say that he doesn't like to play hurt." Most Fearless: Bob Nystrom, New York Islanders. He will fight anyone, size and reputation notwithstanding. "If there's a loose puck in the corner," says Montreal center Keith Acton, "Nystrom will be there and he's going to come out with it. He's unsparing when it comes to throwing his weight around." Best Practical Joker: Nick Fotiu, New York Rangers. "He drove us wild with ice-water-down-the-back tricks," says Whaler Garrett. Now the Rangers are wincing over vaseline spread over telephone receivers, slit ties and shoes nailed to the dressing room floor. Best Reclamation From Oblivion: Jacques Richard, Quebec Nordiques. Atlanta's top draft pick in 1972, Richard fell in love with his clippings and developed other unproductive hobbies. He was dealt to Buffalo and bombed with the Sabres. Quebec took a gamble that a return home would help. It did; he scored 52 goals last season.

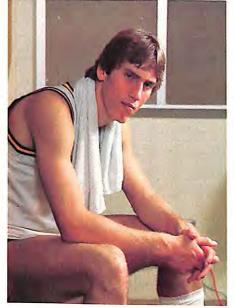
Luckiest Shooter: Steve Shutt, Montreal Canadiens. How he has managed to score 326 goals in nine seasons remains a mystery. "He scores so many crazy goals," says Acton, "hitting the puck out of the air, off a body in front of the net; stuff like that. But Steve has a knack for putting himself in the position to have a chance at all kinds of shots. He's lucky; but to be lucky you have to be good." Best Little Man: Eddie Johnstone, New York Rangers. Implacable in the face of enemy behemoths, this 5-9, 175-pounder is respected as a shooter and fighter. "He's the kind of player every coach wants on his team," says Flyer coach Pat Quinn. That was after Johnstone had beaten up two Flyers. Best Brother Act: Peter, Anton and Marian Stastny, Quebec Nordiques. There never has been a trio whose abilities were so uniformly high. Best Shooter in Europe: Sergei Makarov, Soviet Union. In the 1981 Canada Cup final he made Team Canada players look like fire hydrants with his spirited sprints. He could be the best forward in the world.

STAN FISCHLER'S last article for INSIDE SPORTS was an interview with Dave Schultz in December.

PHOTO CREDITS

Pages 62-63: Mike Bossy, Wayne Gretzky, Guy Lafleur, Ken Linseman, Charlie Simmer and Tiger Williams by United Press International; Clark Gillies by Wide World Photos.

The Rebounding Of Steve Stipanovich



The best big man Missouri ever had shot himself in the shoulder, then lied about it to the police. That was his first big step toward growing up.

By Calvin Fussman

OU JUST GET PISSED OFF. Dammit, you're out there trying to play a game and if you see one more sign that says something like WHO SHOT STUPO?, hear one more cap pistol pop, see one more student wearing a T-shirt with ketchup slopped over the left shoulder, hear one more mental midget in the stands call you a goon, you're going to turn into a towering inferno. Those butchers from Iowa State have been hacking the hell out of you all day long and you realize that this is a road game, but it doesn't seem like the refs would blow their whistles if you were knocked down by a flying dropkick at halfcourt. It's hot. Your jersey is soaked. Sweat is leaking out of the air holes in your sneakers. The shot bounds off the rim and you rebound. As you turn to throw an outlet pass, there's this runt named Lefty standing in your path and that does it. You bash the ball on top of Lefty's head and then make the pass. Next thing you know little Lefty wants a piece of you and the Iowa State coach is on the court waving his arms as if he had just

spotted an airplane after he had been marooned on some deserted island. He's screaming that you should be thrown out of the game or the conference or the continent or something and you're wondering when it's all going to end. Two guys are ready to duke it out and players have jumped off the benches and run onto the court, waiting for something to happen. Timeout! Timeout!

STEVE STIPANOVICH DIDN'T LIKE being tall for a long time. Being almost seven feet can keep you on the edge. People are always gawking at you, waiting for you to bump your head on a doorway or trip over a crack in the sidewalk. Some joker will slyly glance at your feet to see if your pants cuffs are wading above your ankles so he can say something smart. What does he know about sifting through the entire stock of a Large Men's clothing store, praying that one pair of pants will fit halfway decently? Stipo has worked at acting casual. When he walks under a (relatively) low archway, he'll make believe he's checking

his watch so that it'll seem like he's not ducking his head to avoid a collision. But inevitably someone will stroll over and say, "Hey, how's the weather up there?" It's the repetition that gets to you. Stipo has had to stretch his patience well beyond its seven-foot limit to maintain his composure around these people. He is a pacifist by nature. But ... once, an obese woman slurping an ice cream bar tried to get a rise out of a few friends by screaming at him as if he were a circus attraction: "Wow! Just how tall are you?" Stipo politely inquired about the woman's weight and felt damn good as she walked off fuming.

For much of his life, Stipo has been stalked by the stereotype of the gangling, ungainly jerk. The first difficult adjustment for Stipo came in his first year at Chaminade High School in suburban St. Louis, when his 6-0 body began an eight-inch growing binge that would last for a little more than a year. His father, Sam, is 6-6. His mother, Elaine, is 5-10. It bothered him to know that he was going to keep on growing and there was nothing that he could do to stop himself. "Steve walked around the halls kind of hunched over," says his high school coach, Rich Grawer, who this season became an assistant at the University of Missouri. "He just didn't want to be that big." For a while, Stipo refused to admit that his foot had filled out to a size 15, preferring to cram his toes into

Photographs by Dan White

13s and 14s. Later, when he inched past 6-11, he refused to be listed on high school game programs as 7-0 like some freak of nature. Sam Stipanovich, who played for St. Louis University, figured his son's height would be most useful in basketball. After Stipo stumbled through his freshman season at Chaminade, the father—who would maintain an advisory role throughout his son's career—called the coach of another area Catholic school, DeSmet, with the idea of transferring his son to a better program.

DeSmet had been making do with 6-4 centers and Grawer didn't know about sculpting a post man. He wrote nearly 50 college coaches asking for help, culled through their suggestions and tailored the team's practices to his big man. Stipo had trouble getting off the floor. The team would jump for three minutes at a time while holding bricks and wearing weighted vests. Teammates tried to block his shots with carpeted broomsticks and they pounded him under the basket with football blocking dummies.

Stipo arrived an hour before practice to shoot and worked on drills under Grawer's supervision after the other players left. He never complained.

"I once asked Steve why he played basketball," says Tom Hornof, a forward on the same DeSmet team, who later, as a football player, roomed with Stipo at Missouri. "He said it was because he was so tall. When he started playing, he was clumsy and awkward. Maybe that's why he worked so hard to be good."

A back injury caused by too-rapid growth interrupted Stipo's sophomore season. Stretching exercises three times daily were prescribed and he didn't partake in the more rigorous jumping drills in practice. Although back pains have never stopped him from playing since his sophomore year, they have never subsided. He started to dominate the game as a junior-when the DeSmet streak began. The team would go on to win 60 straight games and two state Class 4A titles. With Ralph Sampson (Virginia) and Sam Bowie (Kentucky), Stipo was one of the most heavily recruited centers in the nation. Grawer enforced a strict recruiting policy and the field was narrowed to six schools-North Carolina, Duke, UCLA, Kentucky, Notre Dame and Missouri-by September to help ease the strain. All practices were closed except on Wednesdays and coaches weren't permitted to speak with Stipo afterward. This did not stop representatives from

each school from showing up almost every Wednesday—just to express interest. Notre Dame coach Digger Phelps often made the trip personally.

'That year in St. Louis the baseball Cardinals were awful. The football Cardinals were awful. The Blues were bad. Steve was the light in the period of darkness for St. Louis sports," says Grawer. "Our games were usually sold out by 6:30. One time a traffic jam was so huge that a few players got caught in it and we held up the game for an hour. Security guards once caught a couple-they were about 50 years old-sneaking in through a window after the game had been sold out. The cops didn't let Phelps in one night. He had to go to one priest's house and be snuck in through a back door."

Says Hornof: "People had read so much about Steve that subconsciously he felt that he had to do great. If he was anything less than great, he thought he'd be considered a hype. It got to the point where he was so well known that it was hard for him to go to a party and have a normal time. If people didn't know him, they stared at him. If they did, they'd come over and badger him with basketball questions. And then there'd be the guys who were jealous and wanted to make trouble. It's really rough to put all that on a 17-year-old. The pressure got to him only once. We were playing a rival high school and all their fans were chanting, 'Goon-boy, Goon-boy, Goon-boy,' every time he got the ball. He didn't have a good game."

Nonetheless, Stipanovich had a good year, averaging 25 points and 13 rebounds as DeSmet (32-0) won its second straight state title in Columbia, the home of the Missouri Tigers.

Missouri had never attracted a player who had been fawned over by the likes of UCLA and Kentucky. Coach Norm Stewart had built a solid program over the years by milking every ounce of talent from hard-working farm boys and lesser-recruited city kids. Stewart is not a flashy man-he still eats greasy cheeseburgers and chili for lunch at Booche's while the regulars gabble over the pool tables in the back-but he adjusted his recruiting approach to the competition. A fullcourt press was put on Stipo. Bumper stickers beckoned him to remain in the state; MU LOVES STEVE buttons surfaced; sections of pompom-waving alumni cheered for him at DeSmet games. Stipo made the 120mile trip to Columbia in a Learjet. Welcome signs were posted at the airport by team members. "When Steve

came in for his recruiting trip," remembers junior guard Barry Laurie, "the whole town was psyched."

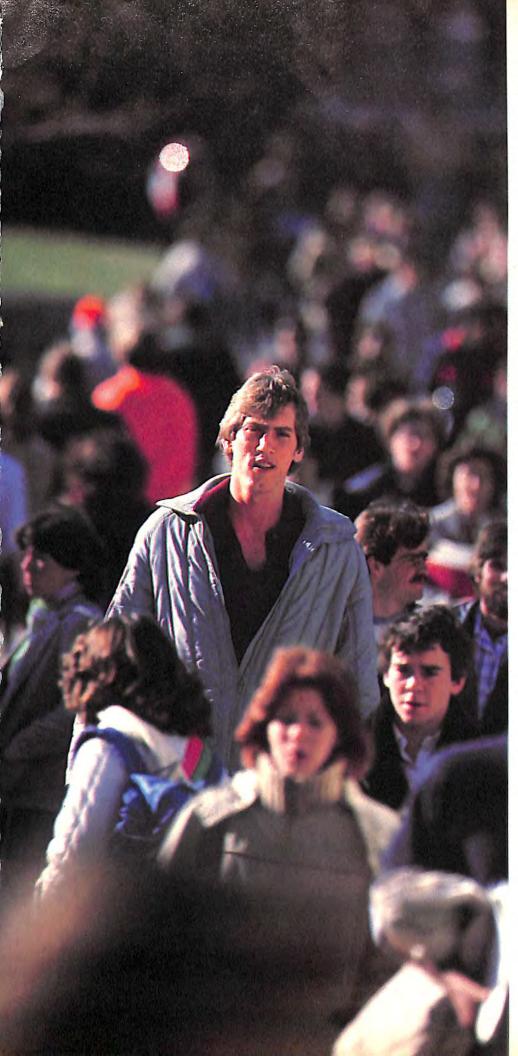
"When you look back at it, you realize how stupid the whole recruiting thing was," Stipo says. "They didn't care about me personally, although they made it seem like they did. They cared because I was a good seven-foot player."

Missouri was the most comfortable selection. The Columbia campus is two hours from St. Louis and his family can attend home games, and two DeSmet graduates—including forward Mark Dressler—have prospered in Stewart's program.

Expectations in Columbia were inflamed when Stipo outplayed Sam Bowie in the Dapper Dan Classic. Optimism was briefly tempered, however, over the summer when Stipo damaged ligaments in his left ankle during a pickup game at a clinic. But he worked hard at rehabilitating himself and was ready for the first day of practice. Attendance at Missouri increased about 3,000 per game in 1979-80 with the arrival of Stipo and Jon Sundvold, a highly sought guard from the Kansas City area. Missouri finished 25-6, losing to Louisiana State in the NCAA tournament. Stipanovich averaged 14 points and six rebounds and was named to the NBC all-freshman team. Stipo was satisfied, although still vulnerable to the expectations of fans and the media. After hitting 10 of 11 fieldgoal attempts and 9 of 10 foul shots against Kansas, he was stunned when he opened a newspaper the next day. "The headline said something like, STIPANOVICH FINALLY DOES WHAT IS EXPECTED," Stipo says.

"When you look back at it now," says Stewart, "you see the pressure Steve was under. There's the winning streak, recruiting, rehabilitating his ankle and the pressure to play well as a freshman. He just needed a break."

"I think he was tired of it all," says Hornof. "He just wanted to be normal. He would be going to lift weights after the season and he'd see students going swimming or sitting around drinking beer and he said to himself: 'Am I missing something? Am I being cheated out of something?' He had been concentrating on basketball for so long. He just didn't want to worry about practicing free throws for a while. We're talking about someone who missed his senior prom because he had to play in an all-star game."



A few days after school let out, Stipo, Hornof and a couple of friends drove to California. They slept on the banks of Lake Tahoe, sat poolside, sipped cocktails and gambled at the Stardust in Vegas and saw The Tonight Show in L.A. A month later, Stipo arrived home with 20 extra pounds dripping from his gut, courtesy, for the most part, of junk food. Stipo's affinity for junk food, particularly ketchup, was legendary. He would eat french fries by the pound and ketchup by the gallon. Teammates sat stunned during pregame meals when Stipo would use an entire bottle of Heinz on a slice of roast beef. If there was a gob left at the bottom of the bottle, he'd use it to make ketchup sandwiches. His vacation diet and lack of exercise contributed equally to his bulge. He wasn't looking forward to sprinting it off.

"When I got back to Columbia, I could hardly run up and down the court," he says. "I skipped the optional practices and nobody seemed to mind. I think the reason Stewart didn't come down on me was because everyone expected me to do well once

the season came around."

At halftime of the first game, Missouri trailed Arkansas 50-28. The chemistry of the team had been destroyed by the loss of guard Larry Drew-who could work the ball inside and had been selected in the firstround of the NBA draft-and the lethargic play of Stipanovich and others. Stipo was a step slow. Guys who had no right to drive on him breezed by. Passes were just out of his reach. He had expected his court awareness to improve, yet he was befuddled much of the time. "I guess I just wasn't concentrating." Already insecure, he was hurt by casual remarks from students: "How come you're not scoring that many points? I thought you were so good.'

Stipo was caught between the desire to be a typical student and the pressure to be a successful athlete. It was his interest in the former that moved him to take an apartment with Hornof and a few other football players during his sophomore year. Stipo had lived with basketball players as a freshman and Stewart was unhappy with the change. When the football season ended, the new roommates had more time to relax and socialize. But that was when basketball started. "When my roommates would go out drinking, I'd go with them," Stipo says. "It was doing me more harm than good. But I just wanted to be one of the guys."

Hornof says that he and his roommates went out of their way not to tempt, that Stipo came along just to be accepted. There were other problems with the arrangement. Stipo was depressed about his physical condition and his play, and there wasn't anybody on the team with whom he could talk about his problems. "I can have a rough practice and be feeling bad and my teammates will talk it out of me in 15 minutes at home," says Sundvold. "If I didn't have anyone to talk with,

and it went off. The bullet went right through my shoulder and out the other side. It didn't hurt. But you can imagine how embarrassing it is to shoot yourself. The first thing you think is, 'How can I get out of this without looking like an idiot?' There was quite a bit of blood and I panicked."

A reserve center who had quit earlier in the year, Lex Drum, had complained of telephone death threats that were investigated by the Columbia pothey just broke me down."

The story was front page. INTRUDER WOUNDS STAR OF MU BASKET-BALL TEAM. CLOAK OF SECRECY SURROUNDS SHOOTING OF STIPANOVICH. The Stipanovich family, teammates and public believed the story until Stipo confessed the next day. Police say such an accident is unlikely, though possible, and many doubted the authenticity of his confession, believing that was a cover-up, too. "People can doubt it all they want," Stipo



I'd mope around until the next practice." Stipo didn't have anyone at all to talk with when his roommates left for Christmas break.

After practice on December 27, he flicked the TV set on and off. Bored, he looked for a book in Hornof's closet. He found a small handgun.

"We had had this big party at the beginning of the school year and some lunatic who nobody knew had shown up with the gun," Hornof says. "He said he was depressed, that he was going to commit suicide. I talked him out of it and he gave me the gun. I was really scared. I don't know anything about guns. I gave it to a friend who does and asked him to unload it. I guess he didn't unload all the bullets. He gave it back and I threw it in my closet and everybody forgot about it."

Stipo: "I got out the gun. I had some books and clothes in my hand and I kind of threw the gun on the bed

lice department. This provided Stipanovich with a plan. "I figured I'd make something up and hope that it would blow over in a couple of days. I figured they wouldn't be able to figure anything out so they'd forget about it."

Stipo phoned a teammate and asked for a ride to the hospital. Police arrived. The tale grew taller with each inquiry. A man wearing a ski mask had burst into his apartment yelling obscenities and fired at him with a rifle and then shot him with a pistol.

"I know it's stupid," Stipo says. "It's embarrassing to talk about it now. But when you start telling a story, you've got to finish it. I was just digging myself deeper and deeper into the hole. At the end I almost said, 'Wait, come back here. I accidently shot myself.' I didn't even shoot myself. I just threw the gun down. The police knew from the start. They went back and got the gun. The next day

He welcomes some needles

says. "It's the truth."

Stipo hid in the basement of his house, ignoring the phone that rang constantly, ignoring the knocking on the front door. His parents came to Columbia. Hornof returned. A day later, Stipo went back to St. Louis.

"I think Steve learned a lot from the incident," Hornof says. "He realized that he had friends who cared about him, regardless of how he played basketball. He realized how much his family loved him. It took a strong person to turn around the way he did. He could have decided to sit out a year because he knew what he was going to face when he went back."

What he was going to face was foreshadowed at a White Castle hamburger emporium at about one in the morning a few days after the shooting. The place was packed and everyone seemed to have read the newspapers. They all stared as Stipanovich and some friends entered. A few students from one of DeSmet's rivals snickered. Stipo's stomach tightened. Finally, one blurted: "Let's go shoot ourselves."

Stipo tried to pummel the guy. His friends wrestled him away and the high school students apologized.

A curt statement had been given to the press by Stewart stating that Stipo had accidentally shot himself and fabricated the story due to embarrassment. But the brevity of the release didn't help. Rumors began to fly. There was talk that he wouldn't be returning to Missouri, that he had been with a prostitute, that the Mafia had come after him, that he was suicidal, that he was a homosexual.

"I'm not going to say that the thought [of not going back to school] never crossed my mind. I knew the misery I was going to face. I was scared. It was one of those things that you know you've got to do even though you might not want to. Going on campus was real tough. You walk into class and try to sit in the back so nobody sees you. I was paranoid. I'd see two people talking and I'd think they were making fun of me."

When he returned to the court in Columbia, the crowd stood and applauded. Rival fans were not so sympathetic. At Kansas, students wearing ski masks and aiming rifles stood on the edge of the court while the Tigers went through layup drills. When Stipo went to the foul line, fans held up huge targets and shot off cap pistols. The abuse snowballed until his explosion at Iowa State, which pulled the team together. Missouri won six of its next seven games en route to its second straight Big Eight title. But there was a loss to Kansas in the league's postseason tournament, although the Tigers (22-9) still received an NCAA tournament bid. After a few shoddy practices, they lost to Lamar, a team they had defeated by 22 points earlier in the season.

"I wanted to win that game bad," Stipo says. "But when it was over I didn't go into the locker room, hang my head and cry. It felt as if 5,000 tons had been lifted off my back."

Stipo relaxed for a while and tried to prop up his grades, which had suffered during the trauma. "I thought about everything that had happened for a month," he says. "Then I decided to forget it all and think about the future. I wanted to be prepared for the next season. I started working with

weights and running. I stopped drinking beer." His roommates noticed that he wasn't eating junk food. They noticed him reading about nutrition. Stipo had cleared his mind. Now he wanted his body to feel good. After watching a TV show about chiropractors, he checked the St. Louis directory, found a listing for Chiropractor Exchange and made a call. The chiropractor said many of Steve's back problems were nutrition-related and he devised a diet that eliminated foods containing preservatives. Stipo startled his friends by going cold turkey on ketchup. The chiropractor prescribed natural vitamins and Stipo began to chew on 90 pills a day to clear out his system and strengthen himself. The freak of nature hadn't exactly turned into a nature freak, but there was an important difference in Stipo. Instead of trying to be like everyone else, he was doing something different, something that he wanted to do.

THE INSTRUCTOR PACES BEHIND THE long desk, stopping only to scribble a few key phrases on the blackboard as she speaks to her nutrition students. She is not lecturing. She is condemning; railing against people who give the public advice without ever having acquired "proper" nutrition credentials.

"There are quacks who will tell you to hold up one arm and then with the other hand press a certain part of the body," she says. "If your arm falls, then you are having problems in the area you are pointing to. Then they will devise a diet to correct the problem. I can't believe anyone would be so stupid as to believe such a thing."

Stipanovich, sitting in the seventh row, shakes his head. "I ought to have the doc come in and debate her."

A week later, Stipo is lying on his back on the couch in the office of R. E. Stottlemyre, a chiropractor in nearby Centralia.

"Hold up your right arm, Steve."

Stottlemyre tries to push the arm down. Stipo resists. The arm remains at a 90-degree angle. "Now, put your finger in your nose."

Stipo puts his left pinkie in his nostril. The chiropractor pushes down on the arm. Stipo clenches his teeth, grimaces and grunts, but the arm falls. "It's a sinus problem."

Stottlemyre walks over to a shelf of pills on the wall, searches for a few seconds and selects a bottle labeled Cal-Amo. "This should do it." He takes out a pill and lays it on Stipo's tongue. "Hold up your arm and put your finger in your nose." He tugs

down, but Stipo resists and the arm remains upright. "These pills will help stop the problem from recurring. Now, I'll do acupuncture to clear up the problem."

A two-inch needle is tapped barely underneath the skin so that it stands like a miniature flagpole beneath the right knee. "We know that weak muscles are connected to organs that are under stress. The sinus problem is causing weakness in the muscles in Steve's middle back. The beautiful thing about working with Steve is that you can see the performance quotient go up. When he came here, his legs were real weak. Now, after acupuncture and with proper nutrition, Steve can jump higher."

Stottlemyre taps a needle into each wrist. A needle is placed into each side of the neck. "This may hurt a bit."

The next two needles are planted at the base of each nostril, then one into each eyebrow.

"Does it hurt?" a visitor asks.

"I can hardly feel it."

Later, during the car ride back to Columbia, Stipo says, "I don't want you to make it sound like I'm living on nuts and berries or that I'm like Bill Walton. I just feel better on this diet. I've grown a lot in the last year. I'm a lot more comfortable with my size, with my ability to socialize. Last year, I could never have gone down to Déjà Vu and not had a drink. Now I can go there and sip on some ice and talk. I can enjoy myself. If I tried doing that during the last couple of years I might have been a nervous wreck. I don't know how things will go this year, but I'm a lot more prepared to play than I was last year."

Stipo is right. He averaged 14 points and nine rebounds a game, while leading Missouri to four straight wins to open the season.

He can feel the difference. "I can remember our first game last year, against Arkansas. I went up for the first rebound and all of a sudden Scott Hastings comes over me like an animal and just grabs the ball away. That set the course for the whole season."

In the first minute of the first game of the 1981-82 season, Steve Stipanovich and Alcorn State center Tommy Collier simultaneously grabbed a rebound. Stipo spun fiercely in a semicircle, clutching the ball with both hands and sending Collier skidding on his belly across the court.

CALVIN FUSSMAN, a frequent contributor to INSIDE SPORTS, is working on a collection of short stories.

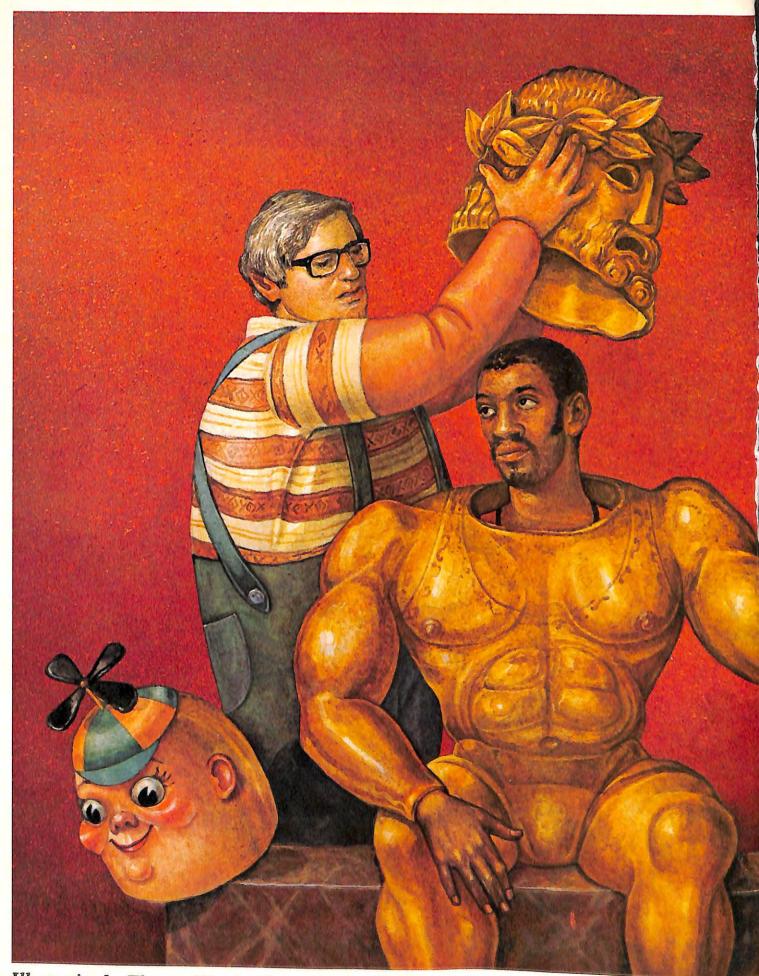
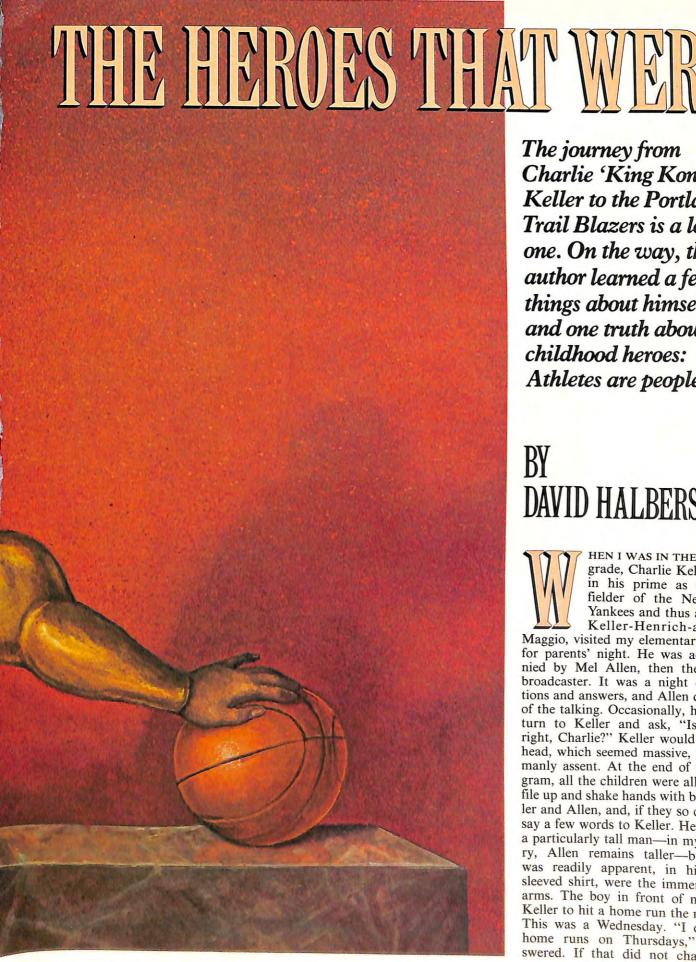


Illustration by Thomas Woodruff



The journey from Charlie 'King Kong' Keller to the Portland Trail Blazers is a long one. On the way, the author learned a few things about himself and one truth about his childhood heroes: Athletes are people, too.

DAVID HALBERSTAM

HEN I WAS IN THE EIGHTH grade, Charlie Keller, then in his prime as the leftfielder of the New York Yankees and thus a part of Keller-Henrich-and-Di-Maggio, visited my elementary school for parents' night. He was accompanied by Mel Allen, then the team's broadcaster. It was a night of questions and answers, and Allen did most of the talking. Occasionally, he would turn to Keller and ask, "Isn't that right, Charlie?" Keller would nod his head, which seemed massive, in quiet, manly assent. At the end of the program, all the children were allowed to file up and shake hands with both Keller and Allen, and, if they so chose, to say a few words to Keller. He was not a particularly tall man-in my memory, Allen remains taller-but what was readily apparent, in his shortsleeved shirt, were the immense forearms. The boy in front of me asked Keller to hit a home run the next day. This was a Wednesday. "I don't hit home runs on Thursdays," he answered. If that did not chasten the other boy, it certainly chastened me. When it was my turn, I remained mute. I shook hands and got out of there as quickly as I could.

Now, some 35 years later, I can remember every detail of that encounter. In those years, I have achieved in my own profession a level of success far beyond my own expectations. I have dealt with men as diverse as Charles de Gaulle, Arthur Miller, Isaac Stern, Paul Newman, Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson-and I can recollect far less of the first encounter with each. I have been in combat on two continents and have only vague memories of many moments when, I thought, my life hung in the balance. But the meeting with Charlie Keller-the first figure of my fantasy actually to appear in my real life-is still at my reach as if it were yesterday.

This is not so surprising. The first heroes, at least for boys of generations past, were athletes. They were the first achievers whose deeds we could identify with. After all, who in his early teens can comprehend the worth and artistry of a scientist or sculptor? But athletes were different. Their deeds—amplified by radio and the seduction of a thousand daily boxscores—were the ultimate extension of playgrounds.

That as boys we saw them as heroes was not surprising. What is astonishing is that, as men, we still regard them as heroes, and their deeds still larger than our deeds. I speak now not just of the new breed of superfan. Rather, I speak of the world I know best, the world of writers, editors, television journalists, pols-the circle of my friends. We are skeptical of Washington and its politicians, Hollywood and its stars, the literary world and our own colleagues. We debate the merits of each other's work with great fury. Only for athletes do we suspend all critical judgment. Never, as the writer and editor Bob Brown once pointed out, has the noisy celebrityiaded atmosphere of Elaine's been so stilled as when Walt Frazier, then in his glory as the star of the Knicks, walked through. In the '60s and '70s, whenever there was a George Plimpton party for jocks, the density of writers was extraordinary. Once, Plimpton gave a party for the Dallas Cowboys, and Ed Hotchner and I went. There we encountered Pete Gent, then a Dallas wide receiver. Gent knew us both, had read our books. When Gent was subsequently traded to the Giants, we were both excited. Gent, though fullblooded jock, turned out to be a closet literatski who wrote quite good books.

His admiration was thus tainted. In fact, the greatest turnout for a book publishing party that I can remember was not for a Styron, Cheever or Updike book, but rather for Roger Kahn's *The Boys of Summer*. The entire New York literary mob showed up—half of them, it seemed, Jewish and in search of Sandy Koufax, who did not attend. The Dodgers who did show up seemed bewildered that grown men of considerable accomplishment could still take *their* ancient feats so seriously.

Why does the idolatry of athletes last so long with writers and eggheads? The answer, I suspect, is the Insider-Outsider theory of American boyhood. The Insiders are boys who are favored at a young age, while the rest of us, deeply impressionable, are not. The Insider is favored in two ways. The first is by peer consensus. A boy has "good looks" and that makes him instantly popular not just with girls, but with other boys and with teachers as well. The second, and perhaps more important, is by athletic excellence. Good things happen to them and they accept it as natural. Most of my friends were not good looking and were not good athletes. We lacked that special easy grace. The one thing we were good at-getting good gradesmade us Outsiders. We did well in things that mattered to our parents. We did poorly in things that mattered to us and to our peers. Now 20 and 30 years later, successful though we may have become, largely because we were Outsiders then, something remains frozen: We are men who have remained boys.

O IT WAS IN THE FALL OF 1979, as nervous as any free agent, I arrived at the training camp of the Portland Trail Blazers, I was a serious basketball freak. I had loved the Knicks in their glory and, in 1977, I had been thrilled by the way Portland had played in its championship season. Now I intended to do a book based on what happens to a team under contemporary societal stress. I had already met the coaches and player-personnel people, men of my age, and that contact had been easy. It was the players, however, I was nervous about meeting. This was not politics, where my name was well known. Here I was traveling without my identity. I would know them; they would not know me.

On the first day of practice, I was a curious schizophrenic mix: half 45year-old veteran reporter, half little boy dealing with his heroes. They, after all, could do what I could not and, more important, what I would have wanted to do. Moreover, I wanted something from them. I wanted them, in their non-basketball incarnation, to be more than just mortal, to have a larger purpose, to be more than they were. Roger Angell, The New Yorker baseball writer, knows what athletes are really like: "They are what they do." That did not deter me. Since they did this one thing with such grace and power, I wanted them to do other things with comparable grace and excellence.

That first week I shyly introduced myself to them and explained my purpose. In the beginning, I called them Mister Lucas, Mister Hollins, Mister Steele. Some of them seemed a little puzzled by the formal approach. I felt as though I were on probation. At night, my wife listened by phone to my progress reports and was stunned by my nervousness. Was this the same man who had scorned so many of his colleagues because they had been seduced by Henry Kissinger's orchestration of the media? The same man who had sat on the board of Foreign Policy, a serious journal devoted to the exploration of national security issues, where almost every other board member was eager to become the next Secretary of State?

I was elated when Lionel Hollins was warm and encouraging, and said the book sounded like a good idea and he would be glad to cooperate. I was depressed when Bobby Gross seemed distant, perhaps hostile (he was wrestling with his own problems, most particularly a bad back that limited his game). I was happy when, after a road game, I had gone out to an Arby's for a sandwich with David Twardzik and it had gone well. On the phone I could hear my wife's disbelief and then the disdain 3,000 miles away. "You went where?" she said. "Arby's," I said, apologetic. "And it went well?" she said, with even greater disdain. I changed the subject.

Gradually, that nervousness ended. The season was too long, and it was too much of a grind, and there were too many shared difficult moments. A writer shares, if not the glory on the court or the constant ache in his knees, at least the numbing quality of the schedule, and the desperate search after a late game and before an early-morning flight to find a decent meal. Jim Brewer and I once, while our flight was grounded in Seattle during a hailstorm, waited in line for 45 min-

utes to get a hot lunch. The moment we sat down, Northwest Orient called the plane. We roared through the boarding line, carrying our trays. We never had trouble talking after that.

Slowly I made contact. Hollins was bright, introspective and curious, aware of a world beyond basketball; Twardzik was tough and candid, asked for nothing and gave nothing, as befit a small man in a tall man's game; Larry Steele, country boy, was good company, funny, wry, skeptical after nine years of the hoopla of professional basketball. Maurice Lucas, true to form, was, offcourt as on, The Intimidator. He kept me at a distance for a few weeks, then regally deigned to deal with me. He was bright, charming, funny and quixotic. Earlier, during a practice session, Luke had been talking with Mychal Thompson during stretching exercises, a sacred part of a Jack Ramsay practice. "No talking during stretching exercises," the coach had said. "Jack La Lanne talks during his stretching exercises," Luke had answered.

s THE SEASON PROGRESSED, I got over much of my nervousness, and even over some of my awkwardness at that curious postgame ritual of being a white, fully clothed older reporter in a dressing room among many naked, powerfully built young blacks. Still I had my own private affectation. I am, in basketball-scout talk, a legitimate 6-3. Still in that season I felt as I never had before. Short. So I favored a pair of cowboy boots, with raised heels. They made me more than 6-4.

Inevitably, I became less the fan and more the reporter. Gradually, I took their achievements on the court more for granted. It was what they did, what they were paid for. As they became more human, I liked them more. I began to sense that they were not only beneficiaries of their status, but prisoners of other people's expectations as well. Rather than making them more expansive, that made them less so. The more that fans pushed at them, reaching, touching, wanting, the more nervous and wary they became. There was the knowledge that the fans wanted of them what they could not be. And there was the other knowledge, that the fans were fickle, that they cheered today and booed tomorrow and that, in truth, the fans pressing close in Portland were the same people who, in every other arena, screamed for their blood, and often seemed pleased when they were injured.

If they were fans, it was largely of each other. In the off hours, riding planes or going out for dinner, they would talk about other players' moves, of what The Doctor-for even the players called him that-or Kareem could do. At moments like that, I had a sense of basketball players, and particularly black basketball players, enjoying their own universe. Yes, America is white and, yes, even this league is run by white owners and coached by white coaches and cheered by white fans and written about by white reporters, but this was theirs, the game itself, and they more than anyone else could be the judges. In those hours there was a special sweetness to their talk, to the purity of their mutual appreciation; there were no rivalries in these moments, a move was a move, a Big Guy was a Big Guy whether he played for them or against them. The most animated I saw some of the Blazer players was the day after the All-Star Game, when they were sitting around talking of a behind-the-back pass that Larry Bird had made, and a move against The Doctor that Walter Davis had made.

For some, this mode of appreciation transcended the game. Bill Walton, for example, was not just a fan of the game; he was a fan of his music, The Grateful Dead. That mattered to him as basketball mattered to me. He traveled with them, was their friend, seemed to hero-worship them, as I had hero-worshipped him. He lectured me on The Dead. Once, wanting to show I was hip, I told him I had been listening to some records. Jerry Garcia, I said, and The Grateful Dead. "No, no, no," he said, genuinely affronted. "It doesn't work that way. Not Jerry Garcia and The Grateful Dead. Just The Grateful Dead. It's a team."

Off the court they were often quiet and reserved. The jump from a poorer, blacker America—which no one wanted to see and no one wanted to know about—to this pseudo-glamorous, high-visibility world of professional sports was not without stress. Ordinary-sized white people, Abdul Jeelani once explained to me, look at a 6-8 black man with a name like Abdul and can never believe that he might be shy and sensitive, that he might be scared of them.

The myths about athletes that had hung over me for some 30 years were all out of kilter. Like many Americans, I had locked in on the pleasures of the high school stars of the '40s and '50s. Those stars came from secure white middle-class backgrounds. In-

siders. They dated, inevitably, the best-looking girls, and they walked the school corridors with the cool arrogance of the small-time jock. But the modern professional basketball player was dramatically different: He was, more often than not, black, and he was not middle class. He often came from a broken home, and he had taken to basketball not out of cool, assured arrogance, but out of a terrible anxiety and, above all, as a means of moving from one America to another. Basketball was the one thing he did well, and he was always aware that his position, so hard won, could readily be snatched from him. Heroism to him was not hitting last-minute jump shots but beating great odds and a terrible system to make the NBA.

There was one other transmogrification that took place during the season. Unconsciously, but probably inevitably, I began to believe that I was one of them. After all, I was with them day after day, we shared the same cruel schedule. Defeat was as painful for me as for them. (I wondered during the early part of the season: If they fell apart, would my book fall apart, would their defeats hurt my sales?) As they so readily soared and dunked, I began to believe that I could soar and dunk. As they so lightly palmed the ball, I believed I could palm the ball.

I did not practice with them. I was not Plimpton writing a participatory memoir. But one day Larry Steele, who was injured at the time, had staved behind at practice and I had stayed with him, talking to him and retrieving the ball so he could work on his jump shot. "Take a few," he said, throwing me the ball. I did. I had not shot a basketball in some 10 years. I was wearing cowboy boots on a basketball floor. All the grace I thought was mine-because their grace was theirs-disappeared. My hands, which in my fantasies had been immense, shrank. My shots, though I had once been a decent shooter, were air balls, bad air balls. I flushed red. Steele, one of the kindest men on the team, began to laugh. I was humiliated.

"Hey," I said, genuinely wounded. "You shouldn't laugh. I wouldn't laugh if you tried to write something."

"Yeah," he said, "but I'm smart enough not to write anything."

Late in the year, its season almost down the tubes, Portland signed Billy Ray Bates and brought him up from the Continental Basketball Association. It was hard not to be moved by Billy—warm, generous, immensely talented and innocent to a fault. Some of the players were the grandsons of sharecroppers, and a few were the sons of sharecroppers, but Billy had actually been a sharecropper himself. I felt an odd kinship with him. In the month that he was born, I had worked in my first job as a reporter on the smallest daily in Mississippi, just 45 miles from his home in Goodman. I knew the segregated Mississippi that produced him and how great the odds against him were. When he arrived in Portland, he called everyone "sir." He dressed for the first few road games in CBA style-he put on his uniform in the hotel. The other players were amused.

One day Billy and I lunched together, and he told me about the poverty of his boyhood, how the sharecropper shack had lacked all amenities, and how hard it had been to see what a life like that did to his mother. Gradually, he began to like the interviews and when I would see him he would volunteer new bits of information. "Got something else here for that book I almost forgot about," he would say. A few days after we were finished talking, he called his lawyer, Steve Kauffman, in Philadelphia. "I'd like you to do me a favor," Billy told him. Kauffman said he would try, though he was a little nervous, since Billy's requests for favors were often exotic.

"There's a guy out here, says he's a writer and he's doing a book on us and he's putting me in it," Billy said. He gave Kauffman my name and Kauffman recognized it.

"Well, what can I do, Billy?" Kauffman asked.

"I'd like you to do all you can to get it published," he answered.

Then, during this season when heroes became mere mortals, there came finally the moment when the enemy became a friend. Much of my craziness as a fan, a genuinely demented fan, had centered around David Cowens. He had for me, at a crucial time in my life, represented the devil incarnate. As a grown man, I had loved-worshipped, really-only one professional sports team, and that was the Knicks of the late '60s and early '70s. Precisely at the moment the Knicks' fortunes had begun to decline. the Celtics', with the young, uncompromising, ferocious Cowens at center, had begun to ascend. Cowens had played with a special fury, had used his body, smaller than that of other centers, as a controlled missile. He gave away nothing; he competed on every play. I took this personally. I believed that the refs always gave the Celtics, particularly Cowens and Havlicek, the calls. When I watched Cowens, I would become enraged. In those days I followed Knick games on TV with New York magazine writer Mary Ann Madden. She would watch in her apartment, I in mine, and we would speak to each other about every play over the telephone. "Look at that SOB," I would rage at Cowens. "Look—no call." She would agree. And then she would add, "But he's cute. So's Don Nelson."

The Knicks brought in a series of saviors who did not save, and I hated Cowens all the more. It began to distort my love of the game. In 1977, when the Celtics played the 76ers, I rooted for Philadelphia. I, who had always considered myself an aficionado, a lover of the purity of the game, rooted against the Celtics of Cowens-Havlicek-White, and for the Sixers of McGinnis-Erving-Free-Dawkins-Bryant. On the afternoon of the seventh game, I did not call Madden. I sat in my small apartment and shamelessly rooted for Philly. After Philly won, I ran into Woody Allen on the street. Allen and I are not friends, but we are acquaintances and our connection is through basketball.

"Great game, wasn't it?" he said. I quickly agreed.

"Gee," he said. "I hated to see the Celtics lose to those guys, didn't you?"

I hesitated, then agreed, meekly, like someone from, well, a Woody Allen movie. "Yeah, what a shame that Philly won." I had compounded the sin: I rooted for a team I didn't like, and then I lied to Woody Allen.

O ONE DAY, SOME TWO-AND-Ahalf years later, I sat with David Cowens in a Portland restaurant. Cowens, favoring a bad foot, had been unable to play and was able to spend more time with reporters than usual. I liked him enormously. He was smart, fair and, a curious word to apply in a situation like this, just. Cowens, perhaps more than any other professional athlete, was the complete man; what he did on the court in terms of ethics and accountability was an extension of what he did off the court. Thus his life was of a piece. He was one of the leaders in a fight to keep some Boston developers from devouring a lovely old suburban horse farm. One of his colleagues in the fight was a sports reporter from The Patriot Ledger of Quincy, Massachusetts. The paper, fearing a conflict of interest, moved the reporter off the Celtic beat. Cowens, normally very accessible to

writers, refused to speak to his replacement for a year. Then Cowens was made player-coach, and the reporter suggested that it was one thing not to talk when Cowens was a player, but another thing when he was playercoach. Cowens agreed and started to talk again. Basketball remained for him a personal affair. He did it as much for his own pleasure as anything else, and he often seemed surprised that others-civilians-could care so passionately about the outcome of a game in which they were not participants. Just a few weeks earlier there had been an ugly incident in San Antonio. The Celtics had been on their way to the team bus after a game when some boozy fans had besieged them. There had been one quite heavyset woman screaming, "Cowens is a sissy! Cowens is a sissy!" He had gone over to her, not to fight but simply to find out why it all meant so much to her and why she was so angry.

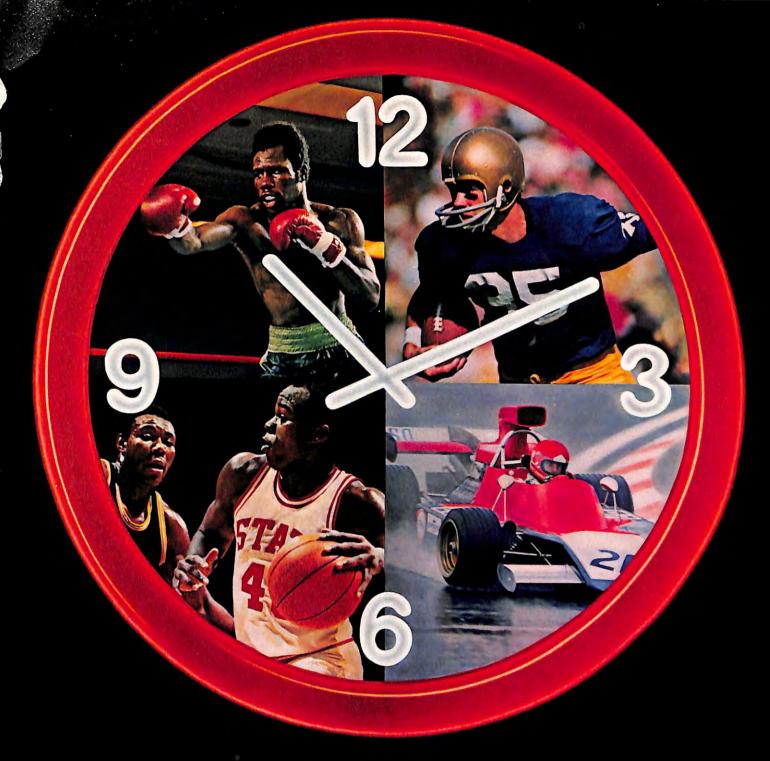
We talked that day at lunch about the old Knick-Celtic games. Cowens had looked forward to them all season because there was so much talent, so much mutual respect on the court. It had been wonderful playing against Willis Reed. Dave DeBusschere was a consummate professional. Bill Bradley was the only player who could run as hard as Havlicek. Well, he corrected himself, almost as hard. It was not just the fans who gave the games meaning, it was the players themselves. Usually a team's sense of values came from the way the players saw each other and the team's purpose. In this rather rare case, it came from their opponents as

Then, basketball done with, we talked about other things. He was curious about Vietnam, about what it had been like to be a reporter there. He wanted to know why Jack Kennedy had asked *The New York Times* to pull me out, and what it felt like when he did. "It went with the territory," I said. Then we got up to leave. I paused for a long moment.

"Listen," I said, summoning all my courage, "I used to boo you a lot. I mean bad stuff, screaming at my television all the time."

He considered this for a minute and then smiled. "It goes with the territory," he said.

DAVID HALBERSTAM, a Pulitzer Prize winner for his reporting from Vietnam, is the author of The Best and the Brightest and The Powers That Be. His latest book, The Breaks of the Game, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in November.



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GEORGIA RUNS TO NO.1

It will be easy. The Bulldogs will make a Pitt stop, while Nebraska thunders past Clemson.

LOVINGER

N SEPTEMBER 19, IN TINY Clemson, South Carolina, defending national champion Georgia lost to then-unheralded Clemson 13-3 in what was perceived as a stunning upset. The Bulldogs stumbled and bumbled all that Saturday long, losing the ball on five interceptions and four fumbles, three by All-American running back Herschel Walker. To the casual observer, the Bulldogs seemed to have no idea what was happening.

Actually, they knew exactly what they were doing. They were following the first rule of winning national titles: It's not who you lose to, or by how much. It's when.

On January 1, undefeated Clemson, top-ranked in both wire service polls, will lose to Nebraska in the Orange Bowl. At the same time, Georgia, 10-1 and No. 2 in both polls, will beat Pittsburgh in the Sugar Bowl. Both Georgia and Clemson will finish 11-1. Georgia will be awarded its second straight national title, only the second team-Oklahoma in 1955-56 was the first-to win back-to-back championships in both polls. (Minnesota 1940-1941, Army 1944-1945, and Notre Dame 1946-1947 did it when AP had the only poll.)

Now flip the sequence. Let's say

Georgia whips Pitt early in the year, rolls through the Southeastern Conthrough ference like Sherman butter and, on the wings of its 24-game winning streak and its No. 1 ranking, is invited to host the Sugar Bowl. Meanwhile, Clemson, after one embarrassing early-season loss to Nebraska, finishes the year with the Atlantic Coast Conference crown, a 10-1 record, the No. 2 ranking in both polls and an invitation to be Bulldog victim No. 25 in New Orleans on New Year's Day. Georgia loses the ball on five interceptions and four fumbles as Clemson scores a stunning 13-3 upset. Both teams finish 11-1. Clemson is awarded its first national championship.

It's just like politics. The trick is to give the voters time to forget.

Back on Planet Earth, the 1981 season is charging to conclusion with a 10-game burst of bowls in five days.

PHOTOGRAPH BY AL SZABO

Tar Heels rolled over their first four opponents by a combined score of 189-28. Then Bryant, who already had 15 touchdowns, injured his knee, starting quarterback Rod Elkins hurt an ankle and North Carolina lost to South Carolina 31-13 and Clemson 10-8. Now Bryant-1,015 yards and 18 TDs, despite playing in only 22 of 44 quarters-and Elkins are both almost 100 per cent. Arkansas has ranged from the sublime (a 42-11 humbling of then-No. 1 Texas) to the pits (a 28-24 embarrassment by TCU). The defense sometimes gives up points in bunches-like 39 to Baylor. This should be one of those times. North Carolina, favored by 31/2, covers 35-11. First downs: NC 23, Arkansas 11.

LIBERTY BOWL, DECEMBER 30, OHIO State (8-3) vs. Navy (7-3-1): It's the first time these two have met in 50 years. Point spread—Ohio State is favored by 10—suggests it may

take the Midshipmen another half century to get up the nerve to try it again. Ohio State tied with Iowa for the Big 10 title, averaged 32 points per game, beat consensus preseason national champion Michigan 14–9. Navy lost to Notre Dame 38–0. Expect something similar here, 41–0. Turnovers: Ohio State

1, Navy 4.

HALL OF FAME BOWL. December 31, Mississippi State (7-4) vs. Kansas (8-3): Good matchup-Mississippi State doesn't lose by much, Kansas doesn't win by much. The Bulldogs, making back-toback bowl appearances for the first time, lost three of their last four games (to Alabama, Southern Mississippi and Mississippi) by a total of eight points. Kansas, which relies on its defense and a strong kicking game, parlayed limited personnel and good field position to its first winning season since 1976, even though it outscored opponents by only 188-185. Look for the Jayhawks, 71/2-point underdogs, to keep winning the close ones, 9-6. Time of possession: Kansas 30:00 (it'll seem like longer), Mississippi State 30:00 (it'll seem like longer).

PEACH BOWL, DECEMBER 31, FLORIDA (7-4) vs. West Virginia (8-3): Hard to work up much enthusiasm for this

one. Florida, last year's turnaround champion, lost to all the good teams it played (Miami, Mississippi State, Georgia). Likewise West Virginia (Pitt, Penn State). Florida, favored by 7½, is coming into this game off a 35–3 bombing of Florida State. West Virginia ended its season grimly, losing 27–24 to Syracuse. Momentum suggests the Gators 24–6. Fair catches: Florida 2, West Virginia 1.

BLUEBONNET BOWL, DECEMBER 31, Michigan (8-3) vs. UCLA (7-3-1): At least two organizations, not counting the schools themselves, wish this was the Rose Bowl matchup-the Rose Bowl Committee and NBC. UCLA, an opportunistic crew that giveth and taketh away, ripped Rose Bowl-bound Washington 31-0 and almost beat USC. Michigan has three first-team All-Americans on offense-wide receiver Anthony Carter, tackle Ed Muransky, guard Kurt Becker. Second-team All-American tailback Butch Woolfolk needs 34 yards to become the Big 10's second-leading alltime rusher. The Wolverines put points on the board (70 against Illinois), except when they play good teams (7 against Iowa, 9 against Ohio State). Bo's Boys have a tradition of not winning the last game of the season-1967-79. Traditions still mean something in the Big 10. UCLA, 21/2point underdog, will win 23-13. Petulant outbursts by head coach: UCLA 0, Michigan 6.

FIESTA BOWL, JANUARY 1, USC (9-2) vs. Penn State (9-2): Good team, USC. Imaginative offense. Hand the ball to Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Allen. See Marcus run (2,342 yards rushing-this year, not career). See Marcus catch (team-leading 29 receptions). See Marcus get bored. Despite this, USC could be the best team in the country. Awesome, that Penn State. Lost to Miami, which could be the best team in the country. Lost to Alabama, which could be the best team in the country. Beat Nebraska, which could be the best team in the country. Tough schedule. Could pay off here. USC is favored by a point. The pick is Penn State, which could be the best team in the country, 24-17. Time of possession: Penn State 28:17, USC 31:43 (it'll take time for Marcus to get his 211, no, make that 212, yards).

COTTON BOWL, JANUARY I, ALABAMA (9-1-1) vs. Texas (9-1-1): Two oddly identityless teams, except for The Bear. Both play like swarms of bees,

running offensive players in and out of the game every other series, gang-tackling on defense like Hell's Angels at a Rolling Stones concert. Game figures to resemble a rugby scrum. Except for inexplicable loss to Georgia Tech (only game the Crimson Tide lost, only game Tech won), third-ranked Alabama could be going for its seventh national title under Bryant. In fact, the Tide still has an outside shot-if Georgia loses, if Clemson loses to Nebraska, if the fourth-ranked Cornhuskers don't beat Clemson impressively. That should be incentive enough. Alabama (favored by 11/2) 17, Texas 9. Kick-return yardage: Alabama 67, Texas 145.

ROSE BOWL, JANUARY 1, IOWA (8-3) vs. Washington (9-2): Fortunately for NBC, no other bowl games will be on at this time. Unfortunately for NBC, people have got to eat dinner sometime. Usually, the way these Rose Bowl things go is like this: The Big 10 team is favored. It shows up for the game and watches in wonder as the Pac-10 team does this weird thing-it throws the ball. Good God, Bo, what the hecksfire are these hippies up to? Well, not this year-Iowa is used to passing teams. And this time Washington is the one-dimensional team, and Iowa is going to make its first visit to the Rose Bowl since the Russian Revolution a happy one. Iowa (favored by 31/2), 30-10. Time of possession: Iowa, all day; Washington, not enough.

ORANGE BOWL, JANUARY 1, NEBRASKA (9-2) vs. Clemson (11-0): The Tigers have everything. They can run, they can throw, they can score, they can play defense. They've beaten good teams, thrashed bad ones. Perry Tuttle is one of the best wide receivers in the country. Free safety Terry Kinard is a first-team All-American. Clemson is the only unbeaten team in the country. Why then is Nebraska favored by 31/3? Apparently, nobody believes a team from the ACC can be that good. They're right. Nebraska 24, Clemson 10. Yards penalized: Nebraska 25. Clemson 58.

sugar Bowl, January 1, PITT (10-1) vs. Georgia (10-1): Why belabor the obvious? Pitt played one good team this year, Penn State. It lost 48-14. Georgia has Walker, maybe the best back ever. Georgia (for some strange reason, an early 1½-point underdog) 23, Pitt 14. Rushing yardage: Walker 224, Pitt 66.

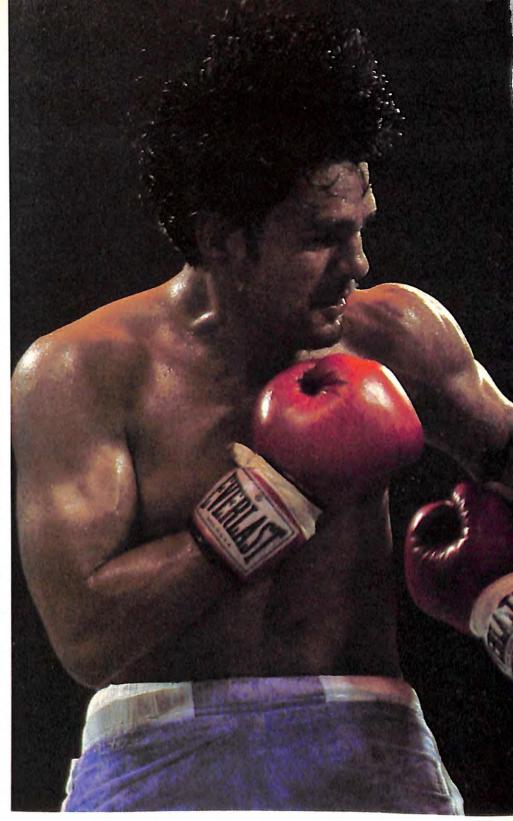
By Jose Chegui Torres

Before Leonard II, Roberto Duran was the meanest fighter on the planet. Will he ever be the same? No way.

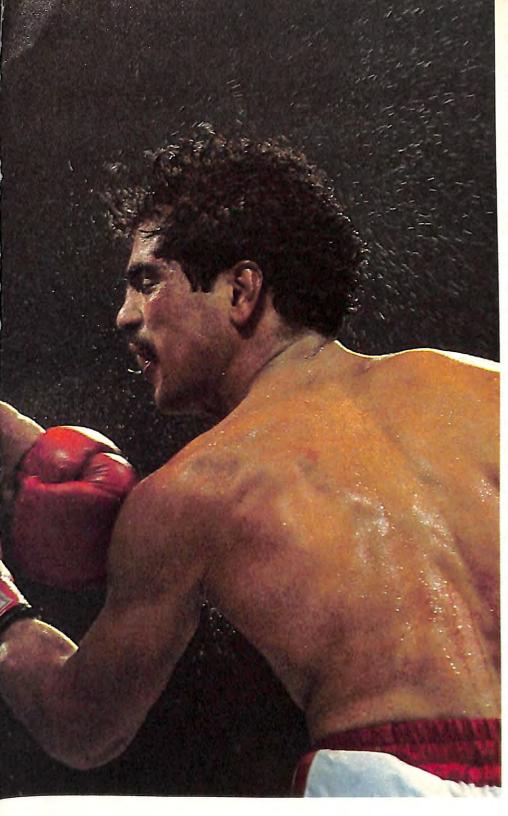
Those who knew claim that there was not an iota of meanness or viciousness in Harry Greb. He was excessively kind and much too tolerant a man to cultivate a killer instinct. So his friends marveled that Greb had adopted boxing as his vocation, never told anyone that he had one eye, and became, according to The Ring magazine, one of the three best middleweights in the history of the game. Once in the ring he'd become a wild, rowdy tiger always determined to do real damage.

As friends soon discovered, Greb had found a way to counter his softness outside the ring. Before a fight, he'd get lost for a few days in the raunchiest brothel in town with the two toughest whores in the place, and by the day of the fight he'd be a different man. "I've become," he would say, "the wickedest sonovabitch in the world."

sonovabitch in the world used to be Roberto Duran. He was the meanest of all lightweights, a vicious animal the first time against Sugar Ray Leonard when he became the ruler of the welterweight division. Now, as he trains for his chance at redemption by fighting Wilfred Benitez on January 30 for the WBC junior-middleweight title, he's trying desperately to get wicked once again. But



The Heart Of the Matter



now he lacks the silent growl that sent trickles of saliva down the sides of his mouth and the murderous eyes that never failed to destroy the courage and ego of his rivals. The snarling beast is no more. He needs to recover the state of viciousness that for a few years held the boxing world in awe. And even that won't be enough for him to reign again.

Not that he isn't trying. Duran has moved his training quarters away from the distractions of New York City, far from the tempting food and best tables at Victor's Cafe and out of the grasp of the pampered women and perfumed men, the hustlers and the hangers-on who infected him with their weak ways. He has left behind the good life of modern champions for the island of

Coiba, an offshore municipality of Panama. There are no bordellos on Coiba with whores waiting to build up "character" like they did for Harry Greb; instead, the island is populated by killers and rapists. There are no phones, no television sets, no movie houses, no gourmet meals. Only a prison, where Duran expects to retrieve his killer instinct. "A place," says Duran, "Sugar Ray Leonard couldn't take for more than two days."

Ever since the night of November 25, 1980, when Duran pressed the panic button by turning his back on Leonard, crying, "No mas, no mas," Duran's life has been in turmoil. The media demand to know "the truth" behind his quitting, refusing to believe that the surrender of his crown was due to abdominal cramps; Latino fans, still outraged, seem incapable of forgiving him for the humiliation he has subjected them to; long-time friends have refused to talk to him; and his cornerman, Ray Arcel, one of the savviest in the business, has not worked Duran's corner since—although he says he will be back for the Benitez fight.

What to do? Duran called on his close friends-Carlos Eleta, his millionaire manager, and General Omar Torrijos Herrera, Panama's leader. Both felt Duran was, in effect, begging for help. Other intimates worried too about the indignation of Hispanic fans, and they were truly alarmed about the possible consequences of their friend's disgraceful defeat. Who could say for sure where the trauma of Duran's quitting might lead? Some feared death-not so outrageous a concern. After all, it is not hard to imagine that a once super-Latino-macho might try to purge his humiliation with alcohol or drugs or fast cars. Or perhaps in a reckless fight in the alley of a barrio. Some form of suicide, in other words, whether intentional or not.

Duran simply could not be allowed to quit boxing. Eleta was right when he said, "We feared that Duran was truly disturbed and that perhaps a chance to redeem himself was the best course of action."

With promoter Don King and his Panamanian connection, Luis Henriquez, Eleta and General Torrijos sketched a plan: Duran would have three tune-up fights, build up his confidence and take on a major opponent. If Duran passed that test, he would go after Leonard and his championship.

Before the plan could be put into effect, Duran had to be brought down to size. From king of the 135-pounders just three years before, he'd blown up to 182 pounds. The media hit Duran with a vengeance: The man who had been called the invincible super-macho of the century had suddenly become the bum of the universe. In shock, he said: "Every time I stopped training in the past, my weight would zoom to many pounds over my fighting weight. Anyone who saw me knew that. Why this, now?" Well, he had never quit before.

Nevertheless, the reclamation project started successfully on August 9 against Mike "Nino" Gonzalez—despite the death, nine days earlier, of General Torrijos in a plane crash. "It's funny," Duran said, holding back tears. "I had a dream just last night that we were flying together toward an island where he has a summer home, to celebrate my victory."

The day Duran resumed his training at the gym in Cleveland, and while he was sparring before a crowd of some 300 people, a small group of Puerto Ricans started to boo him. "Bum," they screamed in unison. "You may have hands of stone, but you surely have a heart of shit!" The group repeated the insult over and over. At one point Duran stopped and yelled back, "You bunch of junkies, marijuana smokers—here, take this home with you." And he grabbed his protective cup with his gloved hands.

The old Duran rage was surfacing again, but he was not able to keep it burning in the ring. He looked rusty, barely winning a 10-round decision.

In the second of the proposed three matches, in Las Vegas on September 26, Duran defeated Luigi Minchillo. But, in the process, Duran added fuel to the notion that his punching power was waning. When Duran was a lightweight, only 14 of 66 adversaries had heard the final bell. But in the heavier divisions, only three of 10 rivals have been separated from their senses, two of whom could have been knocked out by Duran's grandmother.

The Minchillo fight was instrumental in changing the plan. Duran suffered a nasty cut over his left eye that took six stitches to close. With the Benitez-Duran contract already signed as "the big test," the third tune-up had to be canceled. Said Henriquez: "Instead, we prolonged the drills for the Benitez match an additional month."

For all that, no boxing old-timer could be convinced that Duran was actually prepared to confront Benitez. The real Duran—the old Duran—was conspicuous by his absence in those two comeback fights, even though he looked very smart in spots and still had the ability to throw hard, sharp punches.

The day before the Gonzalez fight I had a long conversation with Duran. "If you want redemption," I told him, "you have to take this guy out in three or four rounds." Duran looked me straight in the eye and said: "If I can't do it in three or four, then I'll do it in eight or nine. If not, then I just beat him by decision." Hardly the words of a man who once proudly proclaimed his devastating punching power.

O THE ALTERED PLAN OF only two fights and the choice of Benitez as "the big test" doesn't look quite correct. For Benitez, considered one of the best defensive boxers these days. may reveal that Hands of Stone no longer has the motivation that once made him a superchampion. Like many Latino superchamps before him, Duran suffers from pugilistic decadence-a debilitating disorder that destroys the boxer's will to endure punishment, which in turn causes a leakage in the man's confidence and will. All boxers are vulnerable to pugilistic decadence. Anything that dilutes the drive to punish, to conquer, can cause it-wealth that diminishes the memory of hunger, easy fame, lessviolent options.

There is a mystical trigger in a boxer's psyche that functions automatically with utmost accuracy, also a pair of celestial hands that move your head back and forth and side to side just split seconds before impact. A fighter deprived of this precision—whether, in Duran's case, because he loses the hunger, or, in mine, because he thinks too much—is suffering from pugilistic decadence.

If you let it get the best of you, the message is quite clear: Find another occupation at once. It happened to me early in my career, probably because I had become too rational-one of the hazards of befriending such men as Norman Mailer, Gay Talese and Pete Hamill. I was way ahead, winning practically every round during a bout with a tough Philadelphia pug who seemed to generate energy and endurance every time I landed a blow. His name was Frankie "Kid" Anselm and, as the fight progressed, the rounds became painfully longer and more difficult. I found myself changing patterns in desperation. Anxiety started to

make contact with all the mysterious switches in my brain, although my physical mechanism was performing well enough to maintain a comfortable lead. Suddenly, my arms weakened, breathing became unbearable, and my legs were attacked by a strange sensation of feebleness.

Panic set in.

I wished for a broken hand, a badly twisted leg, some justification to quit—but the only excuse that came to me was exhaustion. In the ninth round, however, I saw Anselm's jaw at firing range. A swift right cross sprang out with shoulder and body behind it, landing flush on my rival's jaw. He dropped like an old shoe. At once, every nasty symptom in my anatomy disappeared, respiration went back to normal, my legs jumped with excitement, my arms felt stronger. I had conquered pugilistic decadence.

This was no small accomplishment for a Latino fighter. Few Latino fighters, raised to believe that a single loss of face destroys the mask of invulnerability forever, ever recover from pugilistic decadence. Once they are beaten, these Latino superfighters, they almost never come back, even if the loss occurs at an early age. Consider, for just a few examples, featherweight Kid Chocolate in the 1930s, a loser at 24; welterweight Kid Gavilan in the 1950s, at 28; featherweight Ultiminio "Sugar" Ramos in the 1960s, at 23; and bantamweights Ruben Olivares and Carlos Zarate in the 1970s, 25 and 28, respectively.

Duran's case is quite complex and peculiar. Luckily for him, pugilistic decadence was late in its test. On his way up, I don't think Duran ever doubted himself, ever gave a moment's thought to pain and its evil sidekicks. He first confronted pugilistic decadence after many victories and many millions, and when it came, it freaked him out, blew his mind in a way that only a fighter can fully comprehend. "No mas, no mas," he said, and a myth died. So now the question is: Can Duran recover and exert his will over the shifty Benitez? I don't think so.

Duran grew up in the midst of poverty and despair. There was no father at home and he was not a constant companion of his mother—he lived in the streets. Toughness was a most important component in the survival kit Duran carried with him during his childhood. Panama, like most Latino countries, is proud of its macho culture—and the men who live in the subculture of misery are especially sus-

ceptible to the mentality of male supremacy. Male self-respect is muscle, physical strength and unruliness. For Latino fighters, the level of machismo reaches maximum heights, and Duran was a proud carrier of this tradition. He was not about to complain when the American media portrayed him as the super-Latino-macho of the century, and it would not be outrageous to suppose that this contributed to Duran's uncharacteristic actions in that eighth round of his second fight against Leonard. What happened to Duran could be viewed as machismo turned inside-out. Leonard's control of the fight—and his successful attempts at taunting and humiliating Duranwere unbearable to a Latino boxing champ. It had nothing to do with cramps or pain; it had no connection to muscles, stance, boxing style or lack of power. Duran's downfall was induced by a lack of will.

This quality gradually was weakened in Duran's soul by the abundance of all the things he did not have as a young boy. But, above all, Duran was brought down in shame with the help of his country's culture. For Latino frustration, when combined with all the variables inherited by fighters, tends to transcend Latino machismo in the moment of truth.

HE IDEA OF TAKING Duran to Coiba," said Luis Henriquez, "was suggested by General Omar Torrijos to his colonels only weeks before he died." Henriquez claimed that the highest military officials from the Panamanian government were concerned about Duran's future in the ring. "They knew that Duran had fallen into the company of hustlers and other 'new friends' that only helped in distracting him," insisted Henriquez. "Before we talked to the general, we had planned to bring Cholo back to L.A., to the same place where he trained for his last fight with Luigi Minchillo in which he looked like his old self.'

So Henriquez made all the preparations to transport his fighter back to Los Angeles. "I took a plane to Panama to pick up Cholo and bring him with me to L.A.," he said. "But when I got to the airport, there was a bunch of National Guardsmen waiting for me, plus two military escort cars." Henriquez got a little worried. "First of all, I couldn't imagine how in hell they knew I was coming."

Henriquez was told not to worry about anything. "Just pick up your luggage and let's go visit the comandante [Florencio Flores, of Panama's National Guard]. He wants to see you at once." The man giving the orders was Colonel Ruben Dario Paredes. The rigidity of his hosts disturbed Henriquez.

As it turned out, Comandante Flores just wanted to inform Henriquez about the plan for Duran's future in the ring: No more boxing drills for Cholo in the good old U.S.A. "Don't unpack," the comandante told Henriquez, "we have a plane waiting to take you and Duran to Coiba."

"It was a fantastic idea," says Henriquez. "There is nothing Duran can do in Coiba but train, train some more and get mean."

Sorry, but I cannot be easily persuaded that Coiba and its horrid environment is the right place for Duran at this stage of his career. Unlike Harry Greb, Duran has never been in need of peculiar training habits to attain viciousness. Let's face it. Duran can never recoup the excellence he exhibited when he was a young, ambitious, hungry lightweight. So, if the Coiba idea is intended to get the *old* Duran back into the ring instead of bringing out the best of *today's* Duran, the whole scheme is misguided.

ILFRED BENITEZ, meanwhile, notorious for his abhorrence of training, was told by his father-trainer Gregorio that the workouts for the Duran fight would take place somewhere away from the San Juan discotheques. Benitez agreed to the idea, but only those close to him know how seriously he is taking Duran. In losing his welterweight crown to Leonard-the referee stopped the match just six seconds before the final bell-Benitez bothered to train for only nine days. Then, 18 months later, Benitez fought champion Maurice Hope for the WBC juniormiddleweight crown and, in one of his most sensational performances, the Puerto Rican disposed of Hope with a devastating right cross to the jaw that kept the champion without the use of his intellect for more than a minute. For that one, Benitez trained for a grand total of 11 days.

Benitez, who at 17 became the youngest man ever to win a world boxing championship, probably has the best moves in the business, and he could be the hardest to hit cleanly. He possesses a most perceptive sense of anticipation and can hurt you with both hands. Duran knows all that, and

he is fully aware of the gravity of this

"I'm determined to knock Benitez out," said Duran after viewing the Benitez-Carlos Santos fight on a video tape flown to Coiba by the National Guard. "Beating him by decision will be the same as losing to him." Duran's words clearly imply that if he doesn't get rid of Benitez via KO, the plan for his revenge against Leonard will automatically be canceled forever.

The boxing community is almost unanimous in its belief that the big test against Benitez will be his last. Almost unanimous. Cus D'Amato, for one, who managed former two-time heavy-weight champion Floyd Patterson and myself, thinks that Duran's intelligence has been underplayed because of his dramatic style. "He is the smartest fighter in the ring today," said D'Amato, "but I don't know how much desire he still has."

No one should expect Duran to fight the way he fought Leonard the first time. To anticipate a repeat of the no mas fiasco is equally ridiculous. "You are a fighter," Ray Arcel, 82, told me in answer to what happened to Duran at that infamous moment. "You know about a fighter's spontaneous actions and reactions." Then Arcel related the story of a fighter who came back after a tough round saying he couldn't go on because he had to go to the toilet. "My bladder is going to explode," the fighter insisted. Arcel told him to continue, that they would pour water over his pants to save him from embarrassment. "You know," Arcel said proudly, "the only other fighter whom I would expect to do something like that is Duran. He is that brave."

But courage will not be enough against Benitez. Even in his losing effort against Leonard, Benitez showed no signs of pugilistic decadence. Other variables—laziness and procrastination—were responsible for his defeat. During his last fight on November 14 against Santos, the No. 1-ranked junior middleweight, Benitez once again did just enough to win. That is a luxury he cannot chance against Duran. For Hands of Stone still has the power and the brains to take advantage of mistakes.

But the best of today's Duran will not be enough to subdue the best of Benitez.

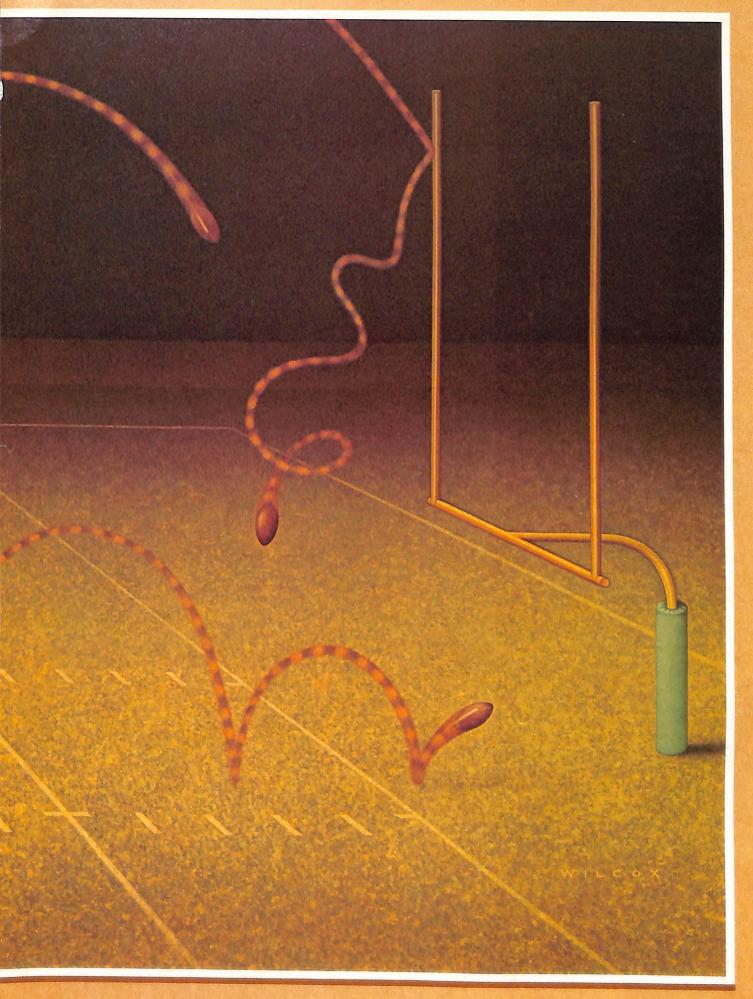
Jose Chegui Torres is a former light-heavyweight champion of the world. He writes frequently about boxing.

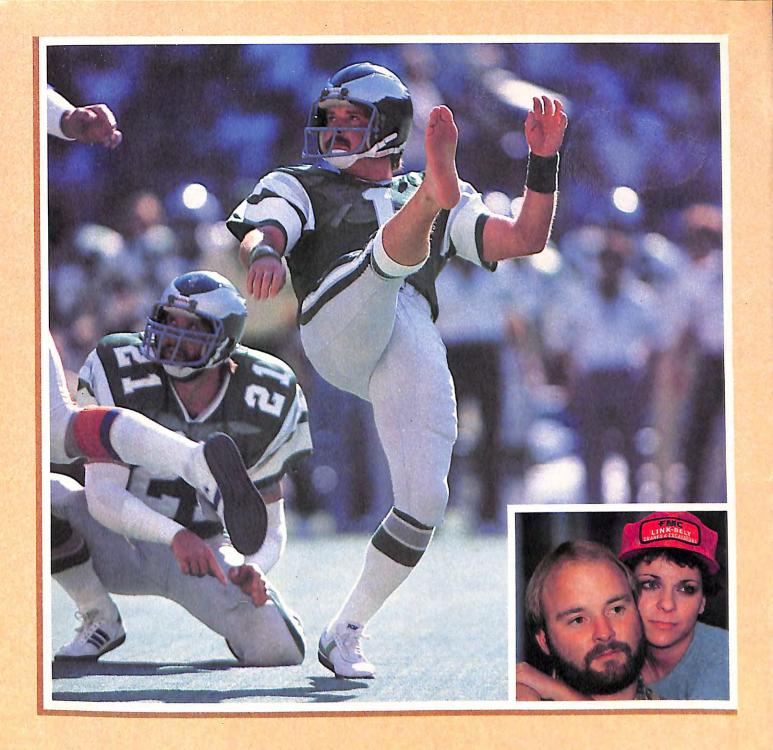
THE SNAPPING POINT

Nothing stabs so straight at what is weak in a man as kicking in the NFL. This is the story of three such men.

BY GARY SMITH

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID WILCOX





"THERE ARE 22 GUYS LOCKED IN A FEUD. SOMETIMES THEY can't settle it. So they call on the hit man. He fires that one shot nobody else will. He makes it, or misses and takes the blame from everybody else.

"You can tell a hit man just by looking at him. His walk is a hard strut. His posture is that of a man who knows he will do it. And his eyes are Roberto Duran eyes, Charles Manson eyes. Very few men were born to be hit men."

—BENNY RICARDO, Saints' kicker

"WE FOUND KICKERS TO BE COMPLETELY UNIQUE FROM OTHer NFL players. Incredibly exhibitionistic, much more independent, and having a strong need for external rewards. A quarterback can complete 55 per cent and get accolades. But 70,000 people expect perfection on demand from the kicker. Often the torment of their teammates hurts them more than the fans' torment. As slight men in a world of giants, they are treated as child-like. They get put down with negative nicknames.

"Many overreact to failure and rejection. They seek some form of temporary relief: drugs, booze, ladies. The judgment on them is always immediate: heel or hero. How many human beings can handle that kind of pressure?"

-BRUCE OGILVIE, sports psychologist

AUTUMN, 1977, A SATURDAY.

Stab a map, just north of Dallas, with a pencil compass and sweep the lead in a 500-mile circle. You have just

surrounded the three most acclaimed college kickers of all time.

More than just a quirk of geography and time has called them to the same circle. The Southwest Conference has always been a kickers' hive, for the air here is warm, the ball alive and little boys who grow up in Texas learn to do everything with a football except put it away for summer.

Game time: 1 p.m. Showtime: noon. At three different stadiums the scene is the same. The same people who stare through airport windows have come early, just to stare at Steve Little, Russell Erxleben and Tony Franklin.

Little, the handsome kid from the University of Arkansas, digs his size-7 shoe into a 40-yard field goal and the ball climbs over the goalposts, over the net . . . and over the three-story Frank Broyles Complex at the end of the stadium. The ball does a jig on the roof and the awe ruptures in ooohs. "I used to love the ooohs," says Little.

Due southwest, Russell Erxleben of the University of Texas has just finished swatting 50-yard field goals and a series of long, aching punts that cut the sky like a bird with its wings tucked. "I even used to tell my holder what side of the uprights I was going to put it through," says Erxleben.

At Texas A&M, Tony Franklin has just scuttled to the 40-yard line and turned to face the end of the field where the other team warms up, mischief curled all over his mouth. They hear the whump of bare foot ripping into leather, look overhead and cringe. Then they turn and scowl at the little man. "I never even had what you'd call a slump," says Franklin.

Life is grand, a leg snap and a fist in the air. The three of them coax the best from each other. They flash 65- and 67yard messages to one another on Saturday afternoons and drink beer with pretty women on Saturday nights.

Within two years the NFL drafts them as high as or higher than kickers have ever been drafted. The pros put cash on every snap of their leg. They take away their tees that made it easy to get under the ball and drive it into the sky. They take away the week-old practice balls Erxleben and Little sometimes used in games. They slash the target area from 23½ feet wide to 18½ feet. They ask them to do it in ice and wind and raw cold, against special teams that spend hours practicing to snuff them.

The position they knew becomes a mystery and the storylines shift. For nothing stabs so straight at what is weak in a man, and bleeds it so pale, as kicking in the NFL.

. TONY FRANKLIN

"Tony Franklin has an ungodly leg, the best in the league. I hope he doesn't ruin it with his attitude. I tried to like him—I couldn't. I put up a case of beer every time we play the Eagles, for anybody who puts him out of the game. Not hurt him—just put him out."

-RUSSELL ERXLEBEN

"I hate Tony Franklin. He had to go barefoot just to get recognition. He thought he was hot stuff."

—STEVE LITTLE

THE SPEEDOMETER SAID 75 AND THE DRIVER SAID sheeeeyeet. A white Toyota was using Tony Franklin's personal lane, the farthest one left on Interstate 95.

The Toyota didn't surrender. Franklin cut to the center lane and passed, but you could see that compromise hurt. Vet Stadium went by the window and Franklin looked twice. "We did have off today, didn't we? I think Dick said we did."

Dick had, and the streak continued. The 1981 season was almost half over and Vermeil and Franklin hadn't scraped fenders yet.

AN IMPISH GRIN SPREAD OVER TONY FRANKLIN'S COUSIN'S face. David Wood was remembering the time he and Tony noticed a hitchhiker and slowed in the right lane. Tony stuck his head out the window and hollered, "Need a lift?" "Yeah," said the hitchhiker. "Then stick a jack up your ass," hollered Tony, as they peeled away.

A knowing grin spread over Tony Franklin's professor's face. "If you don't really know Tony Franklin," said Jerry Elledge, a close friend of Franklin's at Texas A&M, "he'll piss you off just like that. You'll say, 'I'm going to knock that little turd's butt off.' He's actually a hell of a nice guy. He's got a hell of a mouth, but the strange thing is, he can back most of it up. As long as he does, he's fine. The moment he can't..."

A man who grew up on a farm watched Franklin function in the Eagle locker room for 15 minutes Tony's rookie year and knew where he'd seen it all before. A bantam rooster on a recruiting mission, he called him. It's in the way Franklin walks, talks, drives, the way he wears no shirt under a denim jacket in late November, the way he bounces from player to ballboy to trainer in practice, telling off-color jokes, blowing bubbles, knocking hats off people and stepping on them. He does not mean harm, but 5-8 Texans are expected to remember there are 6-4 Texans.

The Eagles could live with a bantam rooster under their feet as long as he could steer a football through two sticks from 50 yards away. The boys did decorate his locker with hot dog wrappers, a blowup Oscar Mayer doll that had Franklin's No. 1 on the back and a huge plastic bottle of French's mustard, and blasted the locker-room stereo system with "I wish I were an Oscar Mayer weiner"—a blues version, jazz version, country version, even Spanish and French versions. "Just a subtle hint, nothing too strong," said Ron Jaworski.

Franklin ripped down the decorations and stomped away. A mistake. "On this team," said special-teams coach Lynn Stiles, "if you can't take a joke, you become one."

He was homesick and single and in a large northern city for the first time. There was too much nervous energy ripping through him to stay home, and he'd never asked for any help or any water with his Jack Daniel's. He snapped on his hat, veered to the left lane, and he and his black Corvette became part of the night.

The reports came in, sometimes just a few hours later than Tony. The Eagle coaching staff got calls from a man who threatened to take care of Franklin if the team didn't keep him away from the man's wife. Tony couldn't win. "He politely refused a woman once," a friend said, "and she felt so scorned that she told her husband Franklin was coming on to her, and the husband got all hot."

He made 23 of 31 field-goal tries that 1979 rookie year, including a 59-yarder against Dallas that was the second-longest in league history, and Vermeil held his terrible swift tongue. Then, in the playoff finale against Tampa Bay, Franklin tried an onside kick when Vermeil had called for a

deep kickoff and The Little Dictator took his teeth out of

the way of his tongue.

Franklin's intentions were good—he'd seen a seam in the Tampa Bay kick-return deployment—but the relationship with his coach was doomed anyway. Vermeil once ran 16 miles to raise money for a charity. Franklin once ran 60 feet through a Pizza Hut wearing nothing but a ski mask. Vermeil fined him \$1,600 for the kickoff. "It's tax deductible anyway," touchéd Tony.

Next season came the moment Tony Franklin's professor worried about: The moment he can't.... Franklin missed three field goals in San Diego and the Eagles lost by a point. "He came in sick, but that's no damn excuse," Vermeil fumed. He missed two short ones against St. Louis but the Eagles won anyway. He missed three against Dallas and they lost by eight. "I hope he grew up today," Vermeil stewed, "but if he didn't, he won't be kicking in this league anymore." He had three field goals blocked in the playoffs, with some help from blocking breakdowns. He crashed from 5th to 26th in an NFL kicking rating, missing 15 of 31, and at the depth of his confusion he even missed the warmup net from a few feet away on the sideline. Instead of just his right foot, all of Tony Franklin felt naked.

"I dreaded going on the field," said Franklin. "I knew if I missed I'd get ripped. I had rabbit ears, I let the jeers and boos get to me. I lost my confidence. I'd never been through a real slump before. Missing three against Dallas was the low point. My last kick, Vermeil said, 'Just relax, you can't

kick any worse."

Franklin lay down in the backseat of a friend's car that night and didn't speak for hours. Nobody wanted to hear about the limited practice time he was getting because of a foot injury from the final exhibition game, or the emotional upheaval over his brother's successful battle with cancer of the bone marrow. Except for family and a few close friends,

the fight was Franklin's alone.

"He'd drive from the locker room to the practice field alone, and be the first guy out of the locker room after practice," said Jaworski. "One day it was 10° and we're out there practicing, freezing our butts off, and Tony shows up late and stands on the sideline drinking coffee, talking with an owner of Bookbinders' restaurant. I can't tell you all the stories of players who tried to take him aside to cool his act. In Oakland, maybe he'd have been perfect, but on this team—no way."

"Bloodshot eyes? Are you kidding?" said Lynn Stiles. "We had several incidents that made it look like Tony Franklin was about to self-destruct. On game days, he thought he'd perform; the rest of the week he'd just tolerate. He missed meetings and got fined. Nobody on this team was

bowing down to him and he didn't understand it."

There were four phases to Vermeil's offseason strategy. First he tried to trade Franklin. "If I'd have been offered a fourth-rounder," said Vermeil, "he'd have gone." He blistered Franklin's ears in a personal conference, openly criticized his maturity in the press and drafted a kicker on the seventh round.

Now the whole tone of the conflict had changed. Vermeil could chew Franklin or his paycheck in private and the bantam rooster could still continue about his mission. But machismo is more appearance than substance, and that's where Vermeil had aimed his desperation blow.

"Vermeil had Tony believing he wasn't any good," said Jerry Elledge, "and I didn't think anybody could do that."

DEEP INSIDE, REJECTION STUNG TONY FRANKLIN MORE than he had ever let the world guess. A neighbor's child

once refused to let him join his club. Franklin: "I set fire to his clubhouse, burnt that mother down,"

He staked out his space in junior high with his fists. He widened it in high school with his foot. He was one of the least affluent members of his suburban Fort Worth school and spent hour after hour smiting footballs so no one would have an excuse to turn a nose up at him. Franklin: "Now a lot of those rich kids are driving trucks and I'm making pretty good money, and I'm laughing my ass off at them."

Physically, he matured earlier than most of his peers, and then in junior high they all grew by him. The bigger they

got, the bigger he carried himself.

"Deep-seated, a lot of that macho stuff is to make up for size," said high school friend Don Grantham. "He was always the smallest in any group he ever hung out with. Tony was so busy keeping his front up, he made people mad at him without meaning to. He's just a nice, normal guy when you get him one-on-one."

A hot temper was waiting for him when he was born; both parents had red hair. "I always told him he was No. 1," his mother Joyce said. Speck, who worked at a water-treatment plant, whistled to Tony when he wanted him to throw a curveball, and became his son's only kicking coach. Tony was the oldest child in a tough three-boy family that could turn a game of Crazy Eights into a civil war, but God have mercy on the first outsider who kibitzed.

He went barefoot everywhere; it would have been unnatural to kick in shoes. David Wood and he would kick over the swing set in his cousin's backyard, using a shoe for a tee and crying out "Stenerud style!" when they tried it soccerstyle. Franklin kicked with a sock all through high school and then, during a practice in a downpour his freshman year at A&M, wearied of wringing it out and left the foot naked. I'll be damned: The ball went even farther.

"But I think A&M hurt him in some ways," said Merlin Priddy, his high school coach. "Hell, he all but had his own valet there. They let him be separate from the team. He came on the field separate before the game, then he had his

own separate writeup every game.

"Right off he was a sensation, and he never recognized he wasn't something A&M wouldn't live and die with. If Vermeil had known what had happened to him in college, I don't know if they'd have even drafted him. Tony needed to go to the well a few times and come up with a dry bucket."

Franklin kicked a 64- and a 65-yarder the same day, torched 18 NCAA records and began noticing that when people met him they looked at his foot before they looked at him. Was it any surprise, when the first dry bucket came up in 1980, that Franklin's self-image was shattered? "I always thought he had plenty of confidence," his father said. "But maybe underneath it all, he's just a scared little boy."

"THE WRITERS UP HERE ARE A BUNCH OF NERDS."

The voice came from somewhere around a corner and behind a bathroom door. Sally is small, good-looking and feisty; in short, a perfect addition to the Franklin clan. They married last offseason. She is Dick Vermeil's secret weapon in his crusade to salvage Tony Franklin, the force he counts on to keep the ungodly leg stretched in front of a TV set at night and 65 per cent accurate by day.

They met in Human Diseases class his senior year. "She walked in in tight jeans and I said, 'Holy Mackerooooola,' said Franklin. He offered her a ride home one day, refused to let her out of the car, detoured her to the bank and chiropractor, accompanied her to class and sat through the film of a natural childbirth when what he really wanted to do was be sick. Sally was impressed. He took her to one of

his favorite dives that night, nearly got in a fight with a 6-6 drunk who didn't believe he was Tony Franklin and told Sally to hide behind the bar until he was through with him. Sally was *real* impressed. "I realized," she said, "he was misunderstood."

She realizes she is one of the few who gets a glimpse of the good-hearted person her husband basically is. "He did drink a lot," she admitted, "but I put a stop to it."

"I drank Jack Daniel's like it was ice water," Franklin

said. "It became a weight problem."

"The press here made Tony out to be a hot dog, out on the town all night chasing women. I know he went to bars, but so what? Tony bowls until 1 a.m. and I fall asleep watching him, that's what a swinger Tony Franklin is."

"They could write what they wanted about me, but when it made my wife cry, that's when I got pissed," Franklin said. "I wish I had half the time to do what they said I did at night. But if you worried about what people said about you, you'd go stark-raving mad."

Tony went stark-raving mad. He reported to camp in 1981 bent on shutting mouths, and if it took shutting his own, so be it. He blew away the opposition, nodded to all the coaches, mingled more with his teammates and drilled 18 of his first 20 field-goal tries in exhibitions and the first part of the season.

"I learned how to handle myself as a professional," he said. "I may have taken my ability for granted last year. I came to camp in good shape and didn't let the press or coaches get to me. I decided to abide by the rules laid down. I just stay as far away from Vermeil as I can, and he hasn't messed with me this year. I'm still bitter about the things that were said. But last year is dead. Bury that sonofabitch.

"Marriage has helped a lot. There was a helluva void, but now there's somebody to come home to and bounce things off... instead of my fist. She's a strong woman, and it's nice to have somebody to draw strength from."

"He's much more mature this year," said Jaworski. "Now

Tony Franklin has a lot of friends on this team."

The first test came November 1 against Dallas, when Franklin hooked a 34-yarder with 1:51 left and the Eagles lost by three. "I was scared that night, he was so depressed," said Sally. "He was saying he just doesn't have it anymore."

He slouched into Dick Vermeil's clubhouse the next day and teammates and coaches told him to forget it. He did not burn that mother down. By afternoon he had self-destruction on hold again and was singing with the radio.

"Maybe I'm naive, maybe it's put on," said Lynn Stiles, "but I like what I'm seeing. Maybe Satan isn't going to have his way with Tony Franklin."

. RUSSELL ERXLEBEN

"I always liked Russell. He missed some field goals and lost confidence and then he'd go out there thinking more about the ones he missed than the one he was taking. The last time I saw him he seemed a lot like me—more reserved."

-TONY FRANKLIN

"Hell yes, I like Russell. Me and him could always agree on one thing. He couldn't stand Tony Franklin either."

-STEVE LITTLE

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A 23-YEAR-OLD KICKER. . . .

Four seconds left in the 1980 season opener, the Saints trail the 49ers 26–23. Russell Erxleben's 34-yard field-goal try goes wide. Ballgame. As he watches it, agony makes him a child again. He goes belly-down to the floor, buries his face in the artificial grass and flogs it with his fist. The boos come down the aisles and press like a boulder on the small of his back.

He staggers to his locker and breaks down in tears. In a roomful of 20-inch biceps and 49-inch chests, it is not the wise thing to do. "I'd have rather seen him kick a few benches or pound a few lockers," grumbles a teammate.

He gathers himself and goes out to meet his new bride, who has just seen him play for the first time. Never a football fan, she is bewildered by the hatred in the seats and the red rims around her husband's eyes. "It was scary," Kari said. "He went home and tortured himself with the TV set."

When the news comes on, he clicks from channel to channel to sample the miss and the criticism on all three stations. "When I woke up the next morning," said Kari, "he was listening to some idiotic disc jockey that would ask, 'What do you think of Russell Erxleben's kicking?' and then squeeze one of those laughing bags."

He tells his wife he is going to quit, goes to practice and advises special-teams coach Whitey Campbell to consider finding another kicker. He places the ball on the same spot in practice and makes 20 straight. Then his leg tires and he misses five of the last six. That's all the radio reporter shows up in time to see, and all Russell hears on his ride home.

He stops at a convenience store to buy orange juice. At the counter, he hears a voice behind his neck. "Don't take his money, lady, he hasn't earned it. Let me pay my money. I earn it." Erxleben glares but doesn't respond. The man follows him to his truck. "Fella, I've never been in a fight in my life," Erxleben tells him, "but you might be my first."

He shoves the man down and gets on top of him with a raised fist. The man apologizes, so does Erxleben. "I wor-

ried for two weeks about a lawsuit," he said.

A few days later, Russell's sister, Cathy, makes a surprise visit from Texas and finds him asleep. She shakes him again and again, but he doesn't awaken. Then he begins to splutter in his sleep, "Go ahead, boo me, boo me, I don't care."

A few weeks and misses later, he goes to a hypnotist, to a psychiatrist and to coach Dick Nolan. "I told him, 'Bring someone else in or I'm leaving. I ain't going to take this anymore.' That one kick had ruined me for the rest of the season. My confidence was shattered in everything. Golf, checkers, jacks—anything I touched I felt I'd lose.

"I wished I'd never become a kicker. I didn't feel I was a good person."

THE LONG, THICK LEG LASHED AND THE FOOT WAS SUDdenly up near Russell Erxleben's blond mustache. One after another the punts left like they were hit by a baseball bat and came down still warm from the Superdome lights. "I don't believe I've ever seen a man kick like that," said Bum Phillips the morning after the October practice.

"I'm the best practice kicker in the world," agreed Erxle-

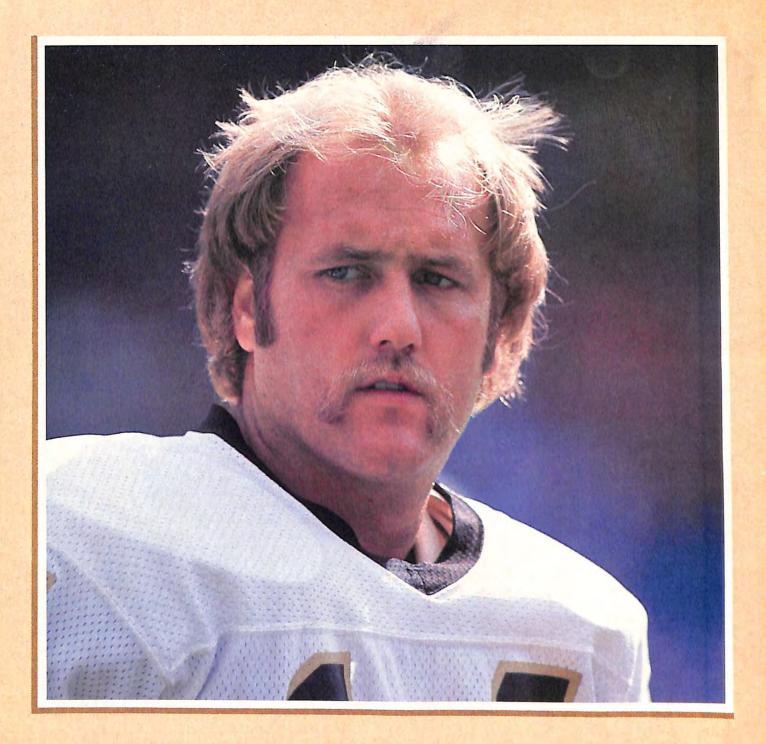
ben.

He handled just kickoffs and punts in 1981, averaging 40.8 yards through 14 games, and he was like a man who'd had the noose removed at the last minute but couldn't get the smell of hemp from his nostrils. Call it haunted relief.

"I don't even practice field goals anymore," he confided.

"I don't want anything to do with them."

Sandwiched around his punting and kickoff workout each



day, he plays four other positions in practice: wide receiver, halfback, quarterback and center. Let other kickers sip coffee; this is Erxleben's cry for acceptance.

"I would walk in the locker room my rookie year," he said, "and my teammates would just laugh at me."

Chosen 11th in the 1979 first round, Russell Erxleben was paid highest and drafted second highest of any kicker in NFL history, by a pockmarked franchise with more pressing craters to fill. ("A mistake," Erxleben calls the selection now.) The fan and media greeting was split between suspicion and delirium. One local TV station zoomed in on his foot and proclaimed, "This is the foot that will put the Saints in the Super Bowl."

The expectations combined with the transition were suffo-

cating. People stared holes in his back with every shank. He was quoted in camp as saying he had a ruptured disc. A hasty press conference was called to deny it and a few weeks later the pain in his back was gone. He was quoted as saying he missed his holder and snapper from college—he says he meant he missed them as friends. "I don't even feel like snapping for you anymore," Saint center John Hill snapped at Erxleben.

An illustration appeared in the New Orleans *Times-Pica-yune* of Erxleben wearing a diaper and sucking his thumb while Dick Nolan held his pacifier and coloring book.

He squibbed a 19-yard punt and botched 32- and 35-yard field goals in his first NFL exhibition. He admitted he was awestruck. "For the first time ever, I felt like I was not

allowed to miss a field goal," Erxleben said.

He sent the 1979 season opener into overtime with a lastminute field goal, and then retrieved a bad snap in overtime, heaved it as he was hit in his own end zone and watched the pass become a game-ending TD interception. His nickname was altered from Thunderfoot to Blunderfoot.

A quadricep injury from college recurred in practice before his second game. Just as that healed, the blood vessels in his left leg swelled, finishing his season. Doctors called it pseudo-gout and said it might have been from nerves.

Meanwhile, his marriage to Ava Elsik, the girl he had dated since junior high, was unraveling. "I'd married her right before training camp. I didn't want to go off by myself. Two weeks later I knew it was all wrong. We weren't friends. She'd get upset if she just saw me talking to a girl outside the locker room. She loved the glamour and I didn't give a damn for it."

Friends say the most crucial thing Ava didn't give Russell was encouragement. By the time his rookie season was gone, Ava was, too.

BLOND, TALL, THICK, GOOD-LOOKING, INSTANTLY LIKable, a hero in Texas-it took Russell Erxleben only a month after he met Kari Hoff to marshal the nerve to ask her for a date. "You better believe he has a fear of rejection," said Kari.

They met after his divorce in June 1980 and he left for camp in July. He told the press he had found religion over the offseason. The season grew closer, the phone bills higher, the need for a pillar stronger. He flew Kari to camp and they were engaged to be married in January. She went home and Russell called her. How about Christmas? Okay. He called back the same night. How about Thanksgiving? Okay. He called back the next day. How about next month, just before the season opener? Okay, Russell, okay.

"To be really honest," he mused 13 months later, "I don't know that much about her.'

The relationship, nevertheless, seems to be working. Punters make better husbands than placekickers do, and Kari's apathy toward football helps keep her husband's life balanced. She also has replaced Russell's sister Cathy as night watchman for his flickering ego.

"We were so close, I used to take him on my dates to the drive-in," said Cathy. "I'd call him every other night when he was in college. I talked him out of quitting once [just before his junior year, when Erxleben says he became tired of the routine of football]. He's so sensitive to criticism, I'd have to go to him whenever he got down just to tell him how good he is. When he missed three field goals at Boston College [his sophomore year], I knew what he'd be like. I jumped in the car and was there to meet him when the team got back at 4 a.m. There were tears in his eyes-he felt he couldn't do it anymore."

From first grade through high school graduation, his sister's straight-A record was smudged by just one B. Russell, two years younger and the only other child of a kindly small-town Texas postmaster, felt that against such brilliance football was the only way he could stay in the sunshine of his parents' smiles. Football excused his Bs and Cs. It became the mirror he looked into.

He ran away from home once and made it as far as the corner. When he returned, his parents looked in the suitcase he had packed. They didn't find clothes. They found his football trophies.

THE MIRROR NEVER CRACKED, BECAUSE 6-4, 219-POUND Russell Erxleben overpowered the competition in high school and college. He averaged 44.2 yards punting at Texas and made 49 of 78 field goals, including the record 67yarder. There were warning signals, though. He once drowned an entire set of golf clubs in the Guadalupe River after a bad round of golf, and he cried when he didn't get the starting quarterback job at the beginning of his junior year in high school. But the failures were always too brief to condition him for the monster that is NFL kicking. His high school coach, Jerry Hopkins, noticed early how criticism affected Russell. "I told all my assistants to leave the boy alone," he said. "I made a point of not yelling at him."

Erxleben considers the years and shakes his head. "I guess everything went too perfect. I thought everything was supposed to be that way. I remember going on the field for field goals in college and we'd actually be laughing. But that got lost somewhere. I think I've ruined it for kickers ever

being drafted in the first round.

"If Bum Phillips hadn't come this year, I don't think I'd have played at New Orleans. I just wouldn't have come back. Sometimes I think I'm in a syndrome where I'll never be good here. The people think I'm an ass because of what's been written here. I just wish they could cut me open and see what's inside."

THE MISSED FIELD GOALS HAVE ALREADY PERFORMED THE incision, but most were too busy with rage to see. The second season still haunts. Erxleben can remember going home to Austin after it ended, to heal, and getting the New Orleans newspapers mailed to him. The compulsion to know what they were saying about him had always been too powerful to ignore. And when what they were saying was bad, he would crumple the sports section and run out the door and not slow for a mile, maybe two, and Kari would go after him on her bicycle to calm him.

And when the self-destructive scream in him stopped and he got back to the house, he would go to his backyard to let the sweat cool him, to the artificial grass he had laid out to simulate the Superdome's where he buried his face. He would stare up at the two goalposts he had planted there, two cold, skeptical arms standing there waiting for the day Russell Erxleben wishes he was a placekicker again.

STEVE LITTI

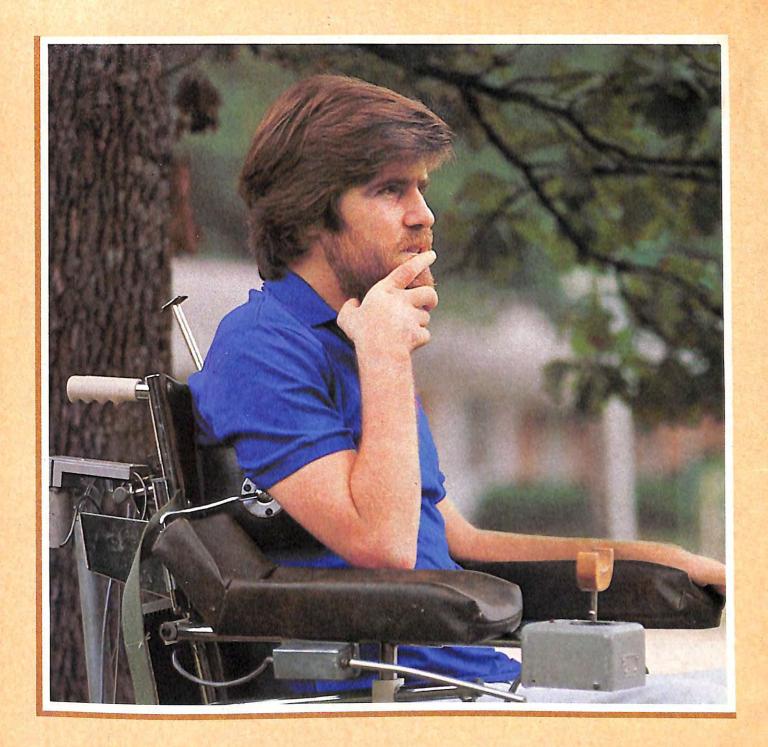
"I think about him all the time—there's hardly a day he doesn't flash through my mind. Our situations were so similar. He had it all together his whole life . . . and then boom. I'd like to have some kind of benefit golf tournament for him."

-RUSSELL ERXLEBEN

"We never got along in college. He told me I'd never be in the same class as a kicker. But you wouldn't wish this on your worst enemy. I'd like to get together a benefit golf tournament for him.'

TONY FRANKLIN

HE AWAKES MOST DAYS WHEN THE DAYLIGHT IS DYING. The drapes are drawn and all that comes through is a sickly pale gray that dulls the soul in places only shut-ins and night-shift workers can know. In the dusk of the walls,



when his eyes adjust, he can just make out the two Razor-back quilts, the plaques from college, the montage of his thrashing footballs at Arkansas. There is nothing on the bedroom walls that says he was ever a St. Louis Cardinal.

In the corner sits a motorized wheelchair that he can't use just now, because there are sores on his buttocks from spending too many hours in it. Moderation was never one of his vices.

As much as possible, the old lifestyle has been dragged across the void to the new. On the headboard there is a monster of a music box that keeps murmuring music without anyone listening. Near it is an empty glass from yesterday's Jack Daniel's and two empty Miller bottles, one with a terribly long straw sticking out the mouth.

The bed is a water bed, king-size, and on it floats a man who can't move from the top of the chest down.

"'Nother beer, Rip," Steve Little hoots. His attendant at his Little Rock home, George Green, brings back a cold one, sends the straw down its throat and holds it just close enough for Steve to catch it with his mouth. He sucks a third of it away.

"Whooooooeeeee," he says. "It doesn't take much to get drunk through a straw. I don't know if it's psychological or if it's just that you don't take in as much air that way.

"How 'bout a smoke, Rip."

Rip lights a Marlboro and lays it on Little's lips. "It's weird," says Steve, "but when I smoke one of these, I can feel a tingle in my feet."

"You want something to eat?" asks Rip.

"Nah." Then, to his visitor: "You know, I can't even tell when I'm hungry now. I'd make a great hunger-striker."

On TV, the Rams are playing the Falcons. The camera catches two cheerleaders and then moves away. "Hey, go back to those two babes on the sidelines, goddammit!"

He is asked about the wheelchair, which has a tote bag hanging from the back with "The Kid" stenciled on it. He calls it his Rolls-Royce. "That thing cost \$6,000. It costs you to get screwed up, man. I'm okay financially [he gets a \$2,000-a-month disability pension from the NFL] unless something catastrophic happens—like I break my neck again."

The flip humor comes again and again, because if you feel bad then he'll feel bad and then you'll leave and there'll be nothing but the sickly pale gray and then that will leave, too, and there will be nothing but the night.

"Sunday afternoons," he sighs. "Nothing like it. Drinking beer, watching TV, laying in bed. . . ."

THREE DAYS AFTER THE CAR ACCIDENT, STEVE LITTLE woke up in traction. Soon he would have four screws in his head, with a halo brace to coax his crushed spine back into alignment. A tracheotomy would be necessary to clear the congestion from his lungs and he would have to breathe and speak from his diaphragm because the nerve that controlled his chest-wall muscles was dead. Doctors would also have to chip a piece of bone from his hip and fuse that and wire into his neck to support his vertebrae. If the spinal contusion had occured 1/16th of an inch higher, his brother says, Steve Little would have been dead.

Many who knew him considered that the more logical alternative. His entire life had hinged on physical activity—camping, skiing, speed-skating, golfing, kicking and partying with a ferocity that sometimes frightened his friends. Ten per cent of quadriplegics commit suicide.

"About a month after the accident, I thought about suicide," he admitted. "I could go to heaven and walk again. I'd get depressed at night, when I was by myself. I felt so distant, torn apart from the world. When everybody would leave, I'd try to move and couldn't. It's a weird feeling. I could feel myself moving, but I couldn't see anything move. Then I just tried to accept it. God must have some reasons for it. There's always someone who has it worse."

These feelings were rarely—if ever—freed during his 10 months in the hospital. Jay Shaw, a unit clerk at Central Baptist Hospital in Little Rock, said Little was the only paralysis victim he'd ever dealt with who never once let out his grief or terror. "Sooner or later they all crack," he said. "With Steve, it was like he was silently gritting his teeth. He'd always be joking."

A difference of opinion exists over how Little has adjusted to a life with just limited movement in his right arm and neck. Some are amazed he is still winging one-liners and partying his way through the night—hey, all right, the same old Steve. And some say the 4 p.m. wakeups and empty Millers are just escapes, that it might have been healthier to hear the wail in the night and then a serious discussion of what he faces.

"Once, he said to me, 'I wish I could hold my head in my hands,' "said Betty Brinkley, a nurse at the hospital. "But most of the time, when someone tried to talk to him about serious things, his goals, he'd turn it into a comic scene. His Cardinal teammates came here and stared at him for what

seemed like days. They didn't know what to say until he made the first crack. It became a kind of mechanism. Steve's a jewel, a delightful person. But he still hasn't accepted it. He isn't ready yet to go out into a new crowd. I suggested he organize a kicking clinic and he nixed it right away. People stare. With a celebrity, they stare twice.

"He likes to be No. 1, surrounded by his friends. If he comes into a room and can't establish himself as the center, he'll turn around and leave. He needs to get up in the morning and go to work. He was doing some public-relations work for the Rolling Razorbacks, a wheelchair basketball team, until he got this problem with sores. He's got to take advantage of his great name in this state within the next few years, or people will say, 'Steve Who?' "

Little: "At nights, my eyes close but sometimes my mind won't stop. The beer takes your mind off thinking about it. It's nothing you'd want to get hooked on. It's just something to relax, let my mind take a break.

"Do I feel sad now? You mean, good grief, Charlie Brown? Nah. Crying makes my nose clog."

THEY HOPPED IN HER MOTHER'S MERCEDES-BENZ AND pointed the nose at Colorado. When they reached Aspen, a thought struck Cindy Sagely.

"My daddy's going to hang me for running off with you like this," she said.

"He'll get over it," shrugged Steve.

"He'll think you carried me off. He'll tear into you, too. Maybe we should get married."

"Okay," shrugged Steve. At least that's how Steve remembers it happening. And if he had to think an idea over twice, it usually wasn't of much use to Steve Little.

He and Cindy drove into the mountains, looking for a proper place for a wedding. They found a boulder near a waterfall at a spot named Independence Pass, then fetched a minister. And in the summer before his senior year of college, in blue jeans, flannel shirt and hiking boots, in air on which he could watch the breath of his vows, Steve Little married a pompom girl from the University of Arkansas.

A week before, said his brother, Gene, they weren't seeing each other.

Almost before the vapor of their vows disappeared, there was trouble. "I thought marriage would settle me down," said Little. "Obviously, it didn't." He was a thoroughbred on a football field and a bronco off it, and nobody was going to break Steve Little. He was too good and too good-looking to sign any compromises. Life was like all the mountains he had skied down as a kid when his father was transferred to Norway. Lean your face into it and let 'er ride.

He led his Norwegian Little League team to the European finals. He became an All-American quarterback, defensive back and kicker on a Shawnee Mission South high school team just outside Kansas City that went 11-0 his senior year and which some rated the best scholastic team in the country. Arkansas coaches camped on his doorstep every Sunday that he returned from visiting another school, to let him know they still loved him, too.

His failures were all trivial; his shock that they could happen to Steve Little was not. He struck out once in a Little League game and fired his bat over the backstop. He quit his high school basketball team because he wanted to fastbreak and the coach didn't. "A hellacious temper," said Gene. "We'd play fast-pitch baseball in the cellar, and when he'd strike out he'd let the bat fly. It didn't hit me often.

"But he'd never really had the heat on him. He could walk through the john and come out smelling like a rose. He was the darling of Arkansas, he never heard a single boo."

Only nine of his 72 kickoffs were returned his senior year, his 67-yard field goal tied Erxleben's NCAA record and his punting average was 44.3. Then the Cardinals drafted him on the first round in 1978 and the world U-turned.

He struggled for trajectory without the use of a tee. Sometimes a whisper would run down the trenches in practice and all the linemen would collapse just as he began to kick. "Want us to get a little lower?" they'd taunt. Sometimes Little would answer with a bullet at one of their faces.

Including exhibition games, the Cardinals lost 10 of the first 12 of his pro career. After Shawnee Mission South and Arkansas, it came as culture shock. "Something about me couldn't accept losing," he said. "I couldn't concentrate."

He lost the placekicking job to Jim Bakken his first year and averaged 38 yards punting. His second year he made 10 of 19 field goals, missed eight PATs and averaged 38.2 a punt. St. Louis was outraged. "He punted once from midfield," said his father, Ron, a fleet sales manager for Caterpillar, "and as soon as the ball started turning end over end in the air, the boos started. It went out of bounds on the three-yard line."

More and more, the kicker went out and numbed his mind to it. "By then," he said, "I didn't give a crap about football." Just before his third season, Cardinal coach Jim Hanifan summoned Little to cool the night life he thought was deadening his kicker's skills. They talked and Hanifan asked him to return the next morning at 10. When Little strolled through the office doors at noon, Hanifan realized it might be hopeless. "I'll throw your frigging No. 1 ass out this door!" he screamed into Little's face.

"I was just being me," Steve said. "I wouldn't do anything different. The [Cardinal] coaches can all screw themselves. After the accident Hanifan came to the hospital and said, 'Cindy, I'm sorry, but life must go on.' [Hanifan says he meant no harm, he was just groping for encouraging words under difficult circumstances.] If Cindy'd had a gun, she might have shot him. When he gets fired, I'll send him a letter. 'You're on the streets, Jim, but life goes on.'

"They messed up my mind from the day I got there. First they said I was the punter, then the placekicker, then both. One game, I hadn't practiced placekicking for a couple of weeks and they stuck me in in the middle of the game, then took me out when I missed two extra points."

Instead of throwing tantrums, he would shrug and laugh. The laugh was hollow; the pain inside was eating with the steady hatred of an acid. But nobody was going to break Steve Little. His teammates interpreted it as a depraved nonchalance. The ones that talked to him called him Orbit.

"Guys just turned their backs on him," said Dave Stief, a close friend and road roommate. "I'd draw the line at 1 or 2 a.m., but for Steve it was 5 a.m. He'd sleep right through the morning meeting sometimes; they'd have to wake him up and almost baby-sit him. When we were on the road, he'd come in the room for bedcheck and then leave. He stayed out all night one Saturday night before our game at Washington. All kinds of girls, girls I didn't think were nearly as nice as Cindy.

"I'd say, 'Steve, you just can't keep screwing up your talent like this,' and he'd joke it off. Don't let anything from the outside world mess with Steve Little's world."

The hurt for a friend was all up in Dave Stief's eyes, the hopelessness for a stranger all down in his voice. "He'll joke it all off," he said, "until the day he dies."

OCTOBER 15, 1980 CAME TO ST. LOUIS DAMP AND CHILLED. When practice ended in the late-afternoon gloom of Busch Stadium, Jim Hanifan ordered his players not to leave. Two

men, getting 16 bullets each to put one another away, at least deserved an audience.

It could never happen at any other position. But then, man has never understood placekicking, and universal mysteries often push him to aberration. Jim Hanifan had scheduled a duel, 16 shots from 32 to 42 yards away for the right to kick for the St. Louis Cardinals. Steve Little, three for eight with two PATs blocked after six games, vs. free agent Neil O'Donoghue.

The two tried hard not to find each other's eyes. Then there came a silence, broken only by the holder's terse signal and the thump.

The Cardinals said Little made 9 of 16, O'Donoghue 14. Little, for some reason, remembers thinking he'd won.

The next morning he was cut. His eyes were red and moist when the reporters found him. He put on sunglasses. "I'm elated," he said. "I feel great because now I can go out and start all over."

First things first. "I'm going to go sit down," he said, "and drink a few cold ones right now,"

HE TELEPHONED CINDY, WHO WAS LIVING IN LITTLE Rock at the time, and told her to drive his Blazer land rover to St. Louis so they could pack. He left a rose and a note on his apartment kitchen counter. "Cindy—We'll start all over again. I'll be home soon. Love, Steve."

He was not home soon. He went to two bars, Fourth and Pine, and the Oz. Customers at one bar insulted him. He told them to shove it. He does not remember how many beers. Only that the number took more than two hands. "He was laughing and joking," said teammate Larry Swider, who was with him at Fourth and Pine.

Near 2:30 a.m., he walked to his Mazda sports coupe and began the 28-mile drive to his suburban apartment. The damp chill had become a slanting rain.

A few miles from home, on Interstate 270, he looked into his rearview mirror and saw the approaching yellow eyes of a truck convoy. He cut to the right lane to let them spray by, hit a pocket of water and went into a spin. An exit sign stopped the spin.

They found him on the passenger's side, his head where your feet go, his feet where your head goes. The only damage showing was a trivial gash on the head.

CINDY SAID IT WAS NOW HER MISSION TO TAKE CARE OF Steve. After 10 months of the stress, she filed for divorce. Friends say it was bound to happen, even without the accident. "She kept telling me, 'You can do this, you can do that,'" said Steve. "I'd say, 'You're not sitting in this chair.' She could have left before the accident—I thought it was an odd time to do it."

On their last day together, the anger crested and Little searched his entire body for a muscle to move against her. "There was nothing I could do," he said, "so I spit at her."

HE LIES ON THE WATER BED, FOUR DAYS AWAY FROM THE one-year anniversary of the wreck. "I think I'll have a wreck party," he said. "Only, everyone's got to come in taxis and stay here when they get wrecked."

The subject changes to the second year after the wreck. "I don't know what my purpose is yet," he said. "But when it comes, I'll be ready for it. Maybe I'll do a movie before the people forget me. I'm sure I'm still here for something. Maybe God kept me alive to teach somebody something."

Maybe to teach the two men he dueled with in college, who still may have time to learn. Maybe to teach all the kickers who never come prepared to bleed.



BY MIKE FRANCESA

BEAR BRYANT'S FABULOUS 43

Bear Bryant, the winningest coach in college football history, has compiled a 315-80-17 record at Maryland (6-2-1), Kentucky (60-23-5), Texas A&M (25-14-2) and Alabama (224-41-9). Forty-three of his former players or assistant coaches have become head college or pro coaches. However, they have not fared well against their mentor as Bryant has a 39-5 record against them, winning 29 straight since losing to LSU's Charley McClendon in 1970.

ACTIVE HEAD COACHES (16)

Association

		Career	With	
	Team*	Record	Bryant	Status
Clark Boler	Bloomsburg State	1-18	Alabama	Player
Charles Bradshaw	Troy State	63-60-6	Ky., A&M, Alabama	Player/Coach
Jerry Claiborne	Maryland	138-76-5	Kentucky, Alabama	Player/Coach
Pat Dye	Auburn	59-29-1	Alabama	Coach
Danny Ford	Clemson	25-9	Alabama	Player/Coach
Jimmy Fuller	Jacksonville State	38-18	Alabama	Player
Al Kincaid	Wyoming	8-3	Alabama	Coach
Larry Lacewell	Arkansas State	12-21	Alabama	Coach
Bill Oliver	UT-Chattanooga	15-6-1	Alabama	Player/Coach
Charley Pell	Florida	66-35-3	Alabama	Player
Ray Perkins	New York Giants	17-29**	Alabama	Player
Bum Phillips	New Orleans Saints	63-41**	Texas A&M	Coach
Howard Schnellenberger	Miami (Florida)	27-24	Kentucky, Alabama	Player/Coach
Jackie Sherrill	Pittsburgh	52-17-1	Alabama	Player
Steve Sloan	Mississippi	51-48-3	Alabama	Player/Coach
Bob Tyler	North Texas State	41-34-3	Alabama	Coach
* Dunnant town for active	hand accobes the last tes	me Can Canna to be	and annalism	

^{*} Present team for active head coaches, the last team for former head coaches

*Still coaching at school

FORMER HEAD COACHES (27)

Mickey Andrews	North Alabama	41-28-3	Alabama	Player
Bill Arnsparger	New York Giants	7-28	Kentucky	Player
Bill Battle	Tennessee	59-22-2	Alabama	Player
Jim Blevins	Jacksonville State	22-15-1	Alabama	Player/Coach
Ray Callahan	Cincinnati	20-23	Kentucky	Player
John David Crow	Northeast Louisiana	20-34-1	A&M, Alabama	Player/Coach
Phil Cutchin	Oklahoma State	19-38-2	Ky., A&M, Alabama	Player/Coach
Paul Dietzel	South Carolina	109-95-5	Kentucky	Coach
Bill Elias	Virginia	36-48-5	Maryland	Coach
Tom Harper	Wake Forest	2-9	Kentucky	Player
Wilbur Jamerson	Morehead State	0-26	Kentucky	Player
J. T. King	Texas Tech	44-45-3	Texas A&M	Coach
Jim Mackenzie	Oklahoma	6-4	Kentucky	Player
Charley McClendon	LSU	137-59-7	Kentucky	Player/Coach
Ken Meyer	San Francisco 49ers	5-9	Alabama	Coach
Bud Moore	Kansas	17-27-1	Alabama	Player/Coach
Frank Moseley	Virginia Tech	54-42-4	Maryland, Kentucky	Coach
Jim Owens	Washington	99-82-6	Texas A&M	Coach
Jack Pardee	Washington Redskins	58-52	Texas A&M	Player
Babe Parilli	NY/Charlotte (WFL)	10-10	Kentucky	Player
Don Robbins	Idaho	20-24	Texas A&M	Player
Jimmy Sharpe	Virginia Tech	21-22	Alabama	Player/Coach
Gene Stallings	Texas A&M	27-45-1	A&M, Alabama	Player/Coach
Jim Stanley	Oklahoma State	35-31-2	Texas A&M	Player
Loyd Taylor	Tarleton State (Tex.)	6-23	Texas A&M	Player
Richard Williamson	Memphis State	32-34	Alabama	Player/Coach
Jim Wright	Wichita State	17-37-1	Texas A&M	Player

THE CRADLE OF COACHES

Miami of Ohio has been the starting point for some of football's finest head coaches. Listed below are the school's coaches since 1932, where they served as head coaches and their career records.

T. 1 1100	1022 11		
Frank Wilton	1932-41		44-39-5
Stu Holcomb	1942-43	Purdue	93-74-12
Sid Gillman	1944-47	University of Cincinnati, Los Angeles Rams, San Diego Chargers, Houston Oilers	204-123-9
George Blackburn	1948	University of Cincinnati, Virginia	60-61-7
Woody Hayes	1949-50	Denison, Ohio State	238-72-10
Ara Parseghian	1951-55	Northwestern, Notre Dame	170-58-6
John Pont	1956-62	Yale, Indiana, Northwestern	98-121-4
Bo Schembechler	1963-68	Michigan*	162-41-6
Bill Mallory	1969-73	Colorado, Northern Illinois*	84-45-1
Dick Crum	1974-77	North Carolina*	67-22-2
Tom Reed	1978-		27-15-2

FAYETTEVILLE FAME

Frank Broyles, the AD at Arkansas, did more than produce an impressive record (144-58-5) as its football coach from 1958-76. Eighteen of his former players and assistant coaches became college or pro head coaches, including Barry Switzer and Johnny Majors, who were assistants on the 1964 and 1965 teams that went 21-1 and went to two Cotton Bowls. Broyles also coached Missouri (5-4-1) in 1957, with Jerry Claiborne as an assistant. Claiborne, now the Maryland coach, has the most wins (138-76-5) of any Broyles assistant. The coaches are listed at their last head posts and with their career records.

Fred Akers	Texas*	55-26-1
Jim Carlen	South Carolina	107-69-6
Charlie Coffey	Virginia Tech	12-20-1
Doug Dickey	Florida	104-58-6
Hayden Fry	Iowa*	106-105-4
Bill Fultcher	Georgia	18-15-1
Ken Hatfield	Air Force*	9-24-1
Hootie Ingram	Clemson	12-21
Jimmy Johnson	Oklahoma State*	17-15-1
Bill Kennard	Mississippi	16-9
Bill Lewis	Wyoming	13-21-1
Jim Mackenzie	Oklahoma	6-4
Johnny Majors	Tennessee*	85-70-3
Bo Rein	North Carolina State	27-18-1
Pepper Rodgers	Georgia Tech	73-65-3
Jackie Sherrill	Pittsburgh*	52-17-1
Barry Switzer	Oklahoma*	89-13-3
Richard Williamson	Memphis State	32-34

^{*} Still coaching at school

COLUMBUS CONNECTION

Woody Hayes, who was 14-5 at Miami of Ohio in 1949-50 and 205-61-10 at Ohio State from 1951-78, may be retired, but his legacy continues. His assistants at Ohio State included Bo Schembechler, Earle Bruce and Lou Holtz (who spent only 1968 at Columbus when the Buckeyes went 10-0 and won the national championship). Below are the career records of Hayes' active key disciples. The last school is where they are now coaching.

Earle Bruce	Tampa, Iowa State,	
	Ohio State	74-41-0
Carmen Cozza	Yale	114-38-3
Lou Holtz	William & Mary, NC St.,	
	NY Jets, Arkansas	94-55-4
Rudy Hubbard	Florida A&M	63-25-2
Bill Mallory	Miami (0), Colorado,	
-	Northern Illinois	84-45-1
Dave McClain	Ball State, Wisconsin	66-47-5
Bo Schembechler	Miami (O), Michigan	162-41-6

THE SPARTAN SIX

Michigan State coach Biggie Munn had some bright boys on his side when the Spartans won the national championship in 1952. Duffy Daugherty and Dan Devine were assistant coaches and Frank Kush and Chuck Fairbanks were on the team. Bob Devaney became an assistant coach in 1953 under Munn and Bill Yeoman in 1954 under Daugherty.

Duffy Daugherty	Michigan State	109-69-5
Bob Devaney	Wyoming,	
30.1.40.4	Nebraska	136-30-7
Dan Devine	Arizona State,	
	Missouri,	
	GB Packers,	
	Notre Dame	197-84-13
Chuck Fairbanks	Oklahoma,	
	New England Pats,	
	Colorado*	105-83-1
Frank Kush	Arizona State	176-54-1
Bill Yeoman	Houston*	139-73-7

^{*} Still coaching at school

MIKE FRANCESA is a feature writer for College & Pro Football Newsweekly.

^{**}Record through December 6



what was Phil Rizzuto's reaction when he discovered, according to reports in the media, his newly purchased herd of holsteins lifeless in his backyard?

F. H., Montclair, New Jersey

"Holy cows!"

Who's leading the NBH in calling the pregame coin toss?

B. B., Foxboro, Massachusetts

That's Todd "Moose" O'Chocolate, captain and offensive left backside for the Scarsdale Parvenus. Moose is 12 for 16 this season and in 1974 set an NBH record of 19 straight wins. He devotes only five to six hours of practice a week to coin calling, "Lotta fellas keep their eye on the wrist," Moose says. "That's wrong-it's all in the thumb. Basically, though, I'm a heads man, though with a lefty ref, I might go to tails, 'specially if there's a strong tailwind. Main thing you gotta remember, though, is never let 'em use your coin. First thing you know, somebody pockets it in all the commotion and you're out two bits."

What's the capital of Valenzuela?
O. M., Pontiac, Michigan

Muchos Dineros.

L've been running marathons for three years with no problems. But in the last two weeks, I've developed excruciating pain in my instep just as I hit the five-mile mark. What should I do to prevent it?

O. H., Barstow, California

Run four miles.

s it true that Colonel Kaddafi is buying INSIDE SPORTS? That's the rumor going around my neighborhood for the last month.

R. A., Troy, New York

Negotiations with Kaddafi, a rabid sports fan, were taking place, but have broken down over Kaddafi's insistence that each issue contain a story on camel racing, falconry and the Cincinnati Bengals. (His sister once went out with a guy who went to graduate school at the University of Cincinnati and Kaddafi has always been fascinated by that city.)

What's the best way to dress a trout? R. J., Butte, Montana

Oh, just throw a bathrobe on him and the hell with it.

w do they make coaches disappear in Los Angeles?

J. R., Naples, Florida

By Magic.

which NFL team has been hurt the most by turnovers this season?

S. B., Grand Forks, North Dakota

Before playing against the New York Jets, the Baltimore Colts stopped for a pregame snack at Ma's Diner, consumed several dozen rancid apple turnovers and, as a result, suffered a 25–0 loss.

hatever happened to halftime? I miss halftime. It was swell. You had loud bands with plenty of brass. You had cheerleaders with plenty of legs. Now all you get is a guy behind a desk reading film clips. Where are the halftimes of yesteryear?

B. C., Bound Brook, New Jersey

There was this economy move. Bryant Gumbel got the halftime concession by outbidding all those bands and cheerleaders. He could do it cheaper. Just one guy and his tapes, a real low-budget operation. Now Bryant is moving. Word is that he may be replaced by a computer.

hy do ballplayers pour champagne on each other's heads after winning a championship ballgame?

R. D., Hoople, North Dakota

Because they don't know you're supposed to drink it. All ballplayers understand is beer. This is why you hardly ever see a ballplayer in a champagne commercial, unless he is French. American ballplayers are under the illusion that champagne is a kind of hair tonic.

Why do winning tennis players jump over the net?

H. G., Montreal, Quebec

Because they don't have any teammates to pour champagne on.

understand that tennis players are now being referred to as tennists. Has this highfalutin type of terminology hit any other sports?

S. Z., Bimini

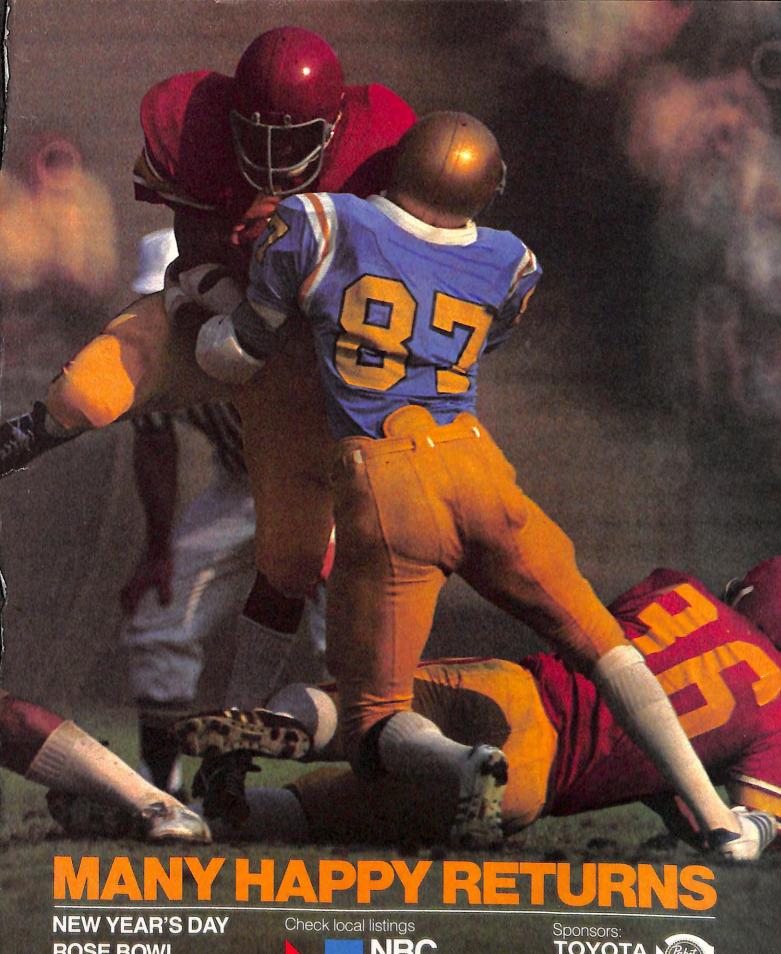
All sport terminology is being upgraded to improve image. Here are some examples to give you the feel of the thing: Sebastian Coe, kilometeorologist; Jack Nicklaus, golfonaut; Joe Klecko, gridironic; Julius Erving, basketeer; Ray Leonard, boxoid; Denis Potvin, hockiac; Giorgio Chinaglia, soccer torte; Nolan Ryan, baseballite; Dick Weber, bowloonist.

football team?

E. G., Winsted, Connecticut

Eleven, except when Detroit is kicking a field goal. ■

Are you among the sportlorn? Don't be ashamed. Help is now available. The Good Doctor knows all, tells some. Send your problems, questions and gripes to The Good Doctor, Inside Sports, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.



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BY MONTY HALL

Let's Make A Deal to Bring Back Orr

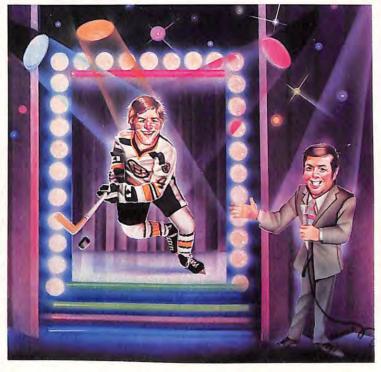
here are you, Bobby Orr? Still in your 30s, watching from the sidelines. Where are you when hockey needs you?

I have watched hockey, as man and boy, for 50 years, and I never saw a player better than Orr. For grace, skating, stickhandling, passing and shooting, there has never been anybody like him. There are those who will tell you that from the blue line in, no one moved toward the goal like the immortal Rocket; no one who could intimidate a goalie like Bobby Hull; no one who could intimidate a team like Gordie Howe. Stickhandling? Try Jean Beliveau or Syl Apps or Andy Bathgate. Passing? Try the Bentleys

and Mosienko, or Schmidt, Bauer and Dumart. Bodychecking? Try Eddie Shore or Ching Johnson. But add them all up and they spell Orr.

Today, Marcel Dionne can split a defense, Guy Lafleur can tie you into knots, Wayne Gretzky has class. But no one dominates the game like that kid from Boston did.

I do have my own hockey credentials. I've been an observer, a terrible player, a worse coach, and sportscaster. From 1958-60, I did the color for the New York Rangers before moving to California and Let's Make a Deal. The great moments are etched in my mind. Perhaps they have grown larger than life in retrospect (every player becomes bigger, stronger, faster as age plays tricks with your memory). I especially remember my boyhood idols-Pike, Kowcinak and McCreedy of the famous Winnipeg Monarchs of 1936, moving the puck over the ice with their checkerboard passing. But it wasn't until I moved to Toronto, covering the Maple Leafs for CHUM, that I became acquainted with big league hockey.



Later, when I went to New York, I saw Rocket Richard score his 500th goal in typical Richard fashion ... crouched over, almost like a speed skater, one arm holding off the defenseman, the other arm controlling the puck. He would cut in from the point in a diagonal line toward the goal, like no one has before or since. I was there when Lou Fontinato challenged Gordie Howe. Big mistake. Howe, one of the superb fighters on skates, gave Leapin' Lou a new nose: It was at a right angle to his face.

My father, now 82, has watched them all for 75 years. "Who were the best you saw?" I asked. He rattled off the names of Cyclone Taylor, Frank Frederickson, Howie Morenz, Eddie Shore, Charlie Conacher and others of

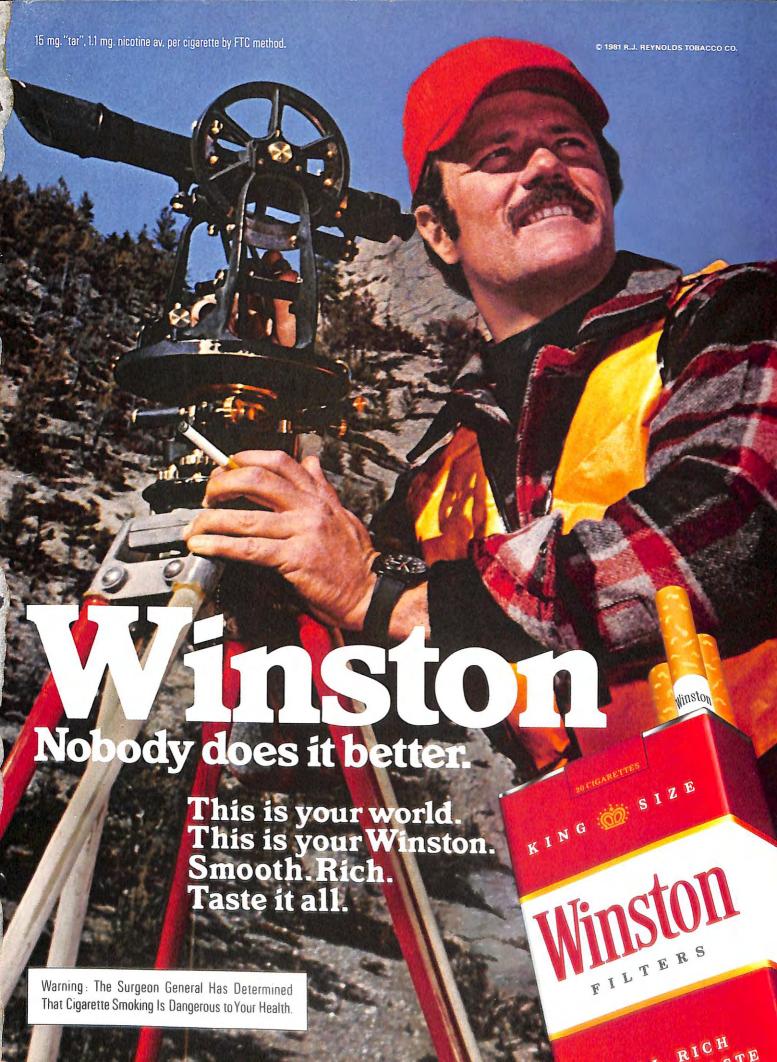
the early days down through the '40s and '50s, then stopped, became wistful, and said, "But the best of them all was Bobby Orr." This is about the only thing the Skipper and I have agreed on since Billy Benson centered the Winnipeg Monarchs. We both tapped him "the smoothest." But if I bet the Eagles, he bets the Raiders; if I

like the Yankees, he chooses the Dodgers. At the racetrack, I scan the racing form and check out workouts, racing conditions, past performances and speed ratings. He looks over the entries and says, "Ah, this horse's daddy was a grass lover 20 years ago. I'll go with him." I lose He wins. At the end of the day, I'm strapped. He says, "Where do you want to go for dinner?"

So when he says Bobby Orr is the greatest, there's 75 years of hockey knowledge in that statement. Add my 50, and we've got 125 years of watching them in unheated pavilions, outdoor rinks and Madison Square Garden. And we say it's Orr.

Wayne Gretzky may be the superstar of the future. But I want to see more of him before I put him in a class with Orr. Never have I seen one man who could take command as Orr did. There was the feeling that every time he took the puck, the potential was there for another goal. He could draw away from checkers in three strides. He could swoop around them, through them or over them.

What baseball lost when Sandy Koufax retired too early with his bad arm, hockey lost when Orr's knees couldn't suffer one more operation. In my reverie—just one more time, Bobby ... around the net, slowly pick up steam, draw away from the fore-checkers, swoop around the defense ... just one more time.



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